IN this study of one of the eighteenth century's greatest personalities, Miss Goldsmith has enhanced her established reputation both as an historian and as a psychologist. In a tangle of intrigue and jaded dilettantism which surrounded the diplomacy of the Benevolent Despots, a stubborn, clever, unhappy woman strove to uphold the Habsburg power over a Germany distracted by Prussian ambition, and won an unwilling tribute from her lifelong enemy Frederick the Great, "Europe thought Austria was lost, and a woman has raised and maintained her."

Miss Goldsmith has produced a brilliant picture of the age and her clear understanding and interpretation of the spirit of Germany is of vital interest to-day. The problems faced for forty years by the great Habsburg queen are the same as the successors of Dollfuss are facing to-day.

MARIA THERESA OF AUSTRIA

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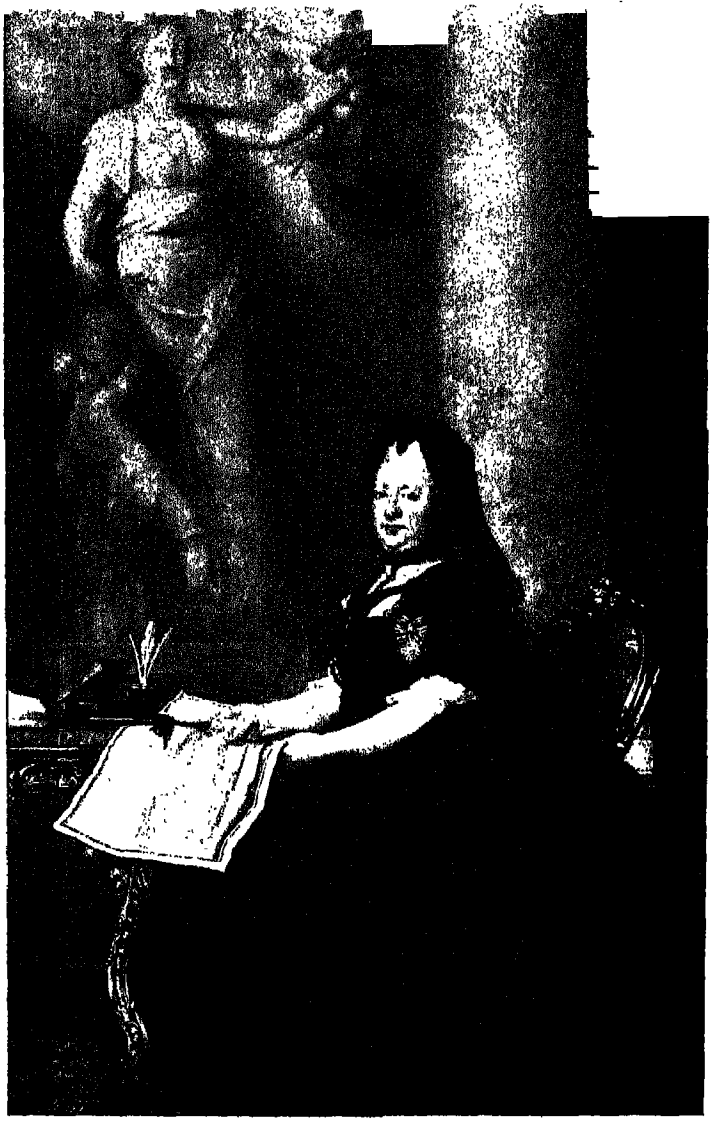

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MARIA THERESA
(From a portrait by Anton Maron, 1773)

MARIA THERESA OF AUSTRIA

BY

MARGARET GOLDSMITH

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TO

WINIFRED HORRABIN

CHAPTER ONE

MARIA THERESA was the only woman ruler of the Habsburg dynasty. Like many women who are the first to hold an important post, she was more serious and more conscientious than many of her male predecessors, and she was convinced that her responsibilities were a divine mission on earth. Her fanatical devotion to the Habsburg dynasty enabled her to prevent the threatening disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in the eighteenth century, and it was largely due to her that this Monarchy continued to exist until early in the twentieth. It has often been questioned whether the persistence of the Habsburgs' power for a century and a half after Maria Theresa's death was worth the wars and bloodshed involved, but even historians who believe that the price was too great, do not belittle her outstanding achievement.

The fact that she succeeded in holding her Empire together against the rising tide of Prussia's influence in Central Europe is all the more remarkable, as she was by nature neither a statesman nor a politician. Politics would not have concerned her had she not become a sovereign, had she not been imbued with a passionate devotion to her Cause. She firmly believed that a woman's place was in the home, and not in the councils of State, and that she was an exception, because God had chosen her for this high office.

For women as a whole, she worshipped the *hausfrau* ideal, and in a century famous for its gallantry and easy

morality, she never wavered from her monogamous principles. She was deeply shocked by the frivolous sexual attitude displayed by her contemporaries, such as Catherine of Russia or Madame de Pompadour. Maria Theresa abhorred promiscuity, but she was never able to impress her own rigid standards on her surroundings. Unlike Queen Victoria, whom she resembled in so many respects, she did not create the spirit of an age; instead, she stood apart from the one in which she lived. She was a striking exception to the morality of her own time, not the founder of a new code of morals.

Maria Theresa was unique among rulers of the eighteenth century, for she took marriage seriously. Her husband, Francis of Lorraine, was her only lover, and she bore him sixteen children. Had she not been a ruling Queen she would have devoted her entire life to serving him, as she believed that women should serve their husbands, but her Cause forced her to subject her own personal family to the interests of her larger family, the Habsburgs.

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Maria Theresa's peculiar simplicity of character was reflected throughout her public life, which was governed by her one consuming passion: her fanatical loyalty to the House of Habsburg. Her devotion to her family, to its power and position, was the decisive impulse behind all of her statesmanship, her thoughts, her ambitions, and her emotions. She loathed Frederick the Great of Prussia because, with an intuition rare in a woman as unimaginative as she was, she felt that he and the Hohenzollerns might one day effectively encroach on the Habsburgs' dominant position in Central Europe. She gloried in the fact that since the fifteenth century

her ancestors had been elected as Holy Roman Emperors of the German Nation. As she, because of her sex, was debarred from this imperial honour, she did not rest until her husband had been elected in her stead. She did not covet this high office for him because she was really concerned with the welfare of Germany as a whole. On the contrary, she, like the Habsburgs who had gone before her, had little patriotism for the confederation of German States. She wanted her husband and her sons to be Emperors only because this would increase the Habsburgs' prestige. She was a Habsburg before she was a German, and all of the Habsburgs, as James Bryce so rightly pointed out, "cared for nothing, sought nothing, used the Empire as an instrument for nothing but the attainment of their personal or dynastic ends."

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Historians have frequently tried to analyse the causes behind the Habsburgs' persistent influence, for it is unusual in the history of Europe for one family to have occupied an important throne for five hundred years. Many reasons have been suggested for their long reign: the wealth of their territories, which were increased from century to century; the relative moderation of the Habsburg rulers at times when tyranny was oppressing other parts of Europe. The relative integrity of the Habsburgs during periods of marked political and diplomatic dishonesty is often emphasised. Their successful alliances, their talent for increasing their domains are often, and very rightly, attributed to their wise marriages. It is true that the Habsburgs had what amounted to matrimonial genius, and "bella gerant alii: tu felix Austria, nube" was a popular verse in Europe for centuries.

All of these factors undoubtedly contributed towards the Habsburgs' persistence, but above and beyond these concrete reasons for their long rule was their own iron determination to remain in power, a determination which was upheld by every generation, which never suffered a break. History for the Habsburgs was centred in the Family. Nothing else mattered, or existed, for them. Paraphrasing Louis XIV.'s "l'État c'est moi," the Habsburgs might well have said, "l'État c'est la Famille."

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The fanatical devotion of the Habsburgs to their family and to Austria had stubbornly continued since the days of Count Rudolph of Habsburg, who was elected Emperor in 1273. Later, in a successful war against King Ottokar of Bohemia, Rudolph conquered the Duchies of Styria, Carinthia, and Austria, of which Vienna was the capital. At first he dutifully administered them as provinces of Germany, but in the end his family feeling got the better of him and he left them to his sons as personal domains. Until the rights of primogeniture were acknowledged by the Habsburgs in 1606, this habit of leaving their territories to several sons often caused serious trouble in the family, for the Habsburgs were always particularly prolific. These occasional conflicts, however, never disrupted the dynasty.

Count Rudolph was the original founder of the Habsburg dynasty, which affected Europe until the end of the Great War in 1918. From Rudolph's time onward every development of history, every crisis in Europe, was exploited by them to increase their influence and to add new territories to their country.

In 1356, when the *Golden Bull*, promulgated by Emperor Charles IV., established the procedure of the

imperial elections and definitely fixed the position of the Electoral College, Duke Rudolph tried in vain to have Austria raised to an electorate. He did, however, persuade Emperor Charles IV. to declare the domains of the Habsburgs as indivisible. Besides, during the next few decades, he added Tirol, Istria, and Triest to his Dukedom.

By the fifteenth century the position of the Habsburgs had considerably improved. Duke Albrecht of Austria had, above all, made a wise marriage. His wife, Elisabeth, was a daughter of Emperor Sigismund, the King of Hungary and Bohemia, and when Sigismund died in 1437, Albrecht inherited these two countries. It is worth remembering in this connection that, apart from thus expanding the Habsburgs' frontiers, Sigismund had also unconsciously laid the corner-stone for their future struggle for supremacy in Central Europe. For in 1415 Sigismund had raised the Burgraves of Nürnberg, the Hohenzollern, to the rank of Electors of Brandenburg, thus giving the first impetus to the ascendancy of a family which, in Maria Theresa's time, when Frederick the Great was the ruling Hohenzollern, was to become the Habsburgs' bitterest rival.

Albrecht, now King of Hungary and Bohemia, as well as Duke of Austria, was elected Holy Roman Emperor in 1438. Thereafter, until the death of Charles VI., Maria Theresa's father, all the Dukes of Austria—they were known as Archdukes after 1453—were elected as Emperors of Germany. They were always formally elected, but the Habsburgs accepted this imperial honour as an hereditary right. They considered this title as their just due even after, as Voltaire expressed it, this Germany had ceased to be "either Holy or Roman or an Empire."

The short break which occurred in this succession, when Maria Theresa succeeded her father and the Bavarian Elector " usurped " the imperial throne, lasted only for three years. Then her husband became the Holy Roman Emperor and he was succeeded by their son, Joseph II. After Joseph's death the Habsburgs never again relinquished this title until 1806, when they merely changed it to the less high-sounding one of " Emperor of Austria."

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The selfish family policy adopted by the Habsburgs was reflected in the actions of most of Duke Albrecht's successors. The decline of the Holy Roman Empire was one of the outstanding developments at the close of the Middle Ages. The decentralisation of the imperial power had actually begun during the Great Interregnum which began at the time of Rudolph, the first Habsburg Emperor. The Habsburgs made no serious effort to counteract the gradual disintegration of Germany; they were not really concerned with such unity as still existed in the Empire. They ignored the fact that the old feudal system was obviously weakening. The Habsburg Emperors were often frankly indifferent to the welfare of Germany, and after the Thirty Years War they made no pretence of looking after Germany. Instead, they concentrated on the affairs of their own territories, though they continued to be elected as Emperors of Germany.

In common with his ancestors, Albrecht's successor, Frederick III., who was Emperor for forty-three years, until 1493, did not take his imperial duties seriously. He did not attend the Diet regularly, and he showed little interest in reforms within the Empire. He did not try very actively to defend the Empire against the

Turkish invasion, though by the end of the fifteenth century almost the entire Balkan peninsula had been conquered by the Sultan. Frederick was too much occupied with his own troubles in Hungary and Bohemia to give much thought to the Holy Roman Empire. Besides, he was having serious difficulties with Duke Charles the Bold of Burgundy, on whom he had refused to confer a Kingship, and Charles was now threatening the western frontiers of his country.

Frederick was, however, endowed with the Habsburgs' talent for clever marriages, and he solved this problem by marrying his son Maximilian to Mary, Charles the Bold's daughter. Conveniently, she was also his heir, so that after Charles's death Maximilian, and thus the Family, inherited the Netherlands and the Franche Comté. The menacing conflict with Charles had become an asset instead of a liability to the Habsburgs.

Maximilian has often been called "the second Founder of the House of Habsburg." Actually he was more concerned with the welfare of Germany than most other members of his family; he encouraged reforms and called together the first Diets of Worms, Augsburg, and Cologne. Despite himself, however, he did more for Austria than he did for the Empire. This was not due as much to his own personal efforts as to the age in which he lived. He ruled from 1493, a year after the discovery of America, to 1519, two years after the Reformation. Apart from these two tremendous events, which were to revolutionise thought and change the map of Europe, it was, as Bryce says, "an age of change and movement in every part of human life, a time when printing had become common, and books were no longer confined to the clergy, when drilled troops were replacing the feudal

militia, when the use of gunpowder was changing the face of war."

At this time the kingdom of the Habsburgs came into greater prominence because, during the Renaissance, scepticism and realism were replacing medieval mysticism, and the "shadowy rights" of the Holy Roman Empire were no longer accepted as unquestioned traditional prerogatives. With the decline of the vague and indefinable prestige of the Holy Roman Empire, the actual and very real power of Maximilian and the Habsburgs increased. Maximilian asked the Pope's consent to call himself "Imperator Electus." An Emperor Elect had replaced a Holy Roman Emperor. Germany had emancipated herself from Rome, and this began a new ascendancy of the Habsburgs.

Besides, and by this time the wise marriages of the Habsburgs had become famous, Maximilian married his son Philip as wisely as he himself had been married by his own father. Philip married Joanna, a daughter of Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon. Philip and Joanna's son was Charles, known to history as Charles V. The power of the Habsburgs had penetrated the Spanish Peninsula, the entire European Continent.

The reign of Charles V., on whose vast Empire "the sun never set," was of tremendous importance to Maria Theresa, though he lived two hundred years before her. Under Charles, the Habsburgs became involved in the conflict between France and Spain. Charles's bitter rivalry with Francis I. of France was the original cause of Maria Theresa's antagonism towards France, of the continuous hatred between Austria and France which was not terminated until 1756, when Maria Theresa and her Foreign Minister, Count Wenzel Kaunitz, finally brought about an alliance between the two countries.

Charles V.'s valiant defence of Europe against the Turks was continued by Prince Eugene under Charles VI., Maria Theresa's father. The fact, furthermore, that Charles V. was the King of Spain, later caused the Wars of the Spanish Succession which so profoundly affected Maria Theresa's life. None of her ancestors had a greater influence on Maria Theresa's career than Charles V.; his rule profoundly affected her own.

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No biography of Charles VI., Maria Theresa's father, has been published for many years because, despite a life full of exciting outward experiences, he remained dull, a typical example of that "Austrian phlegm" which so often bored his foreign contemporaries who visited Vienna. Again and again, this rather short man, whose chief outward characteristic was his sallow skin and a protruding lower lip, a "Habsburg lip" in the extreme, confronted unexpected and dramatic situations, but they did not disturb his pedantry. His sluggish temperament was not moved by the most stirring upheavals, and his spirit remained untouched. He seemed to be a man without violent personal impulses, and "even in the ardours of youth," we are told, "he never deviated into any glaring excesses." He had no sense of humour; "he remained serious even when he smiled." When as a youth he was in England at the Court of Queen Anne, she and her followers were struck by his "precautious gravity."

For thirty-seven years Charles was a ruling monarch, first of Spain and then of Austria, and during twenty-one years of this period his country was at war, chiefly against Turkey and France. He was not really warlike at heart, but, like all the Habsburgs, he was dominated by a passionate desire to keep his family inheritance

intact and, if possible, to add new territories to his Empire. For this reason he never shirked a war when he believed, rightly or foolishly, that the Habsburgs' interests or their prestige were at stake. When the honour of the Family was involved, he could be stubbornly brave. In 1706, for instance, he remained with his army in Barcelona when it seemed certain that the French would invade the city, and in 1713, when a terrible plague epidemic was raging in Vienna, he stayed in the city with his people.

Charles's courage was not spontaneously heroic, but his sense of duty was considerably greater than his fears. He would have preferred a quiet family life, devoted to his hobbies and, above all, to hunting. "By nature Charles was endowed with all the characteristics that make a good middle-class subject," Frederick the Great once said of him, "but he had not a single quality of a great man." Like many ruling monarchs who have little creative talent themselves, Charles was extremely interested in music and in painting. He brought architects—Fischer von Erlach, for instance—to Vienna to make his capital more magnificent, he directed an orchestra, he once wrote an opera, and he assiduously collected pictures. One English contemporary who visited his collection rather cruelly remarked, that "the Emperor has some pictures of great value. I went yesterday to see his repository . . . where they seem to have been more diligent in amassing a great quantity of things than in the choice of them."

Perhaps Charles had developed so many hobbies because in his youth he had been "merely a second son," the younger brother of his clever and attractive brother Joseph, who would obviously succeed their father, Emperor Leopold I. It is recorded that Charles, who

was born in 1685, "was not as gifted with talents as his elder brother Joseph, and had not enjoyed the same advantages and education."

Charles's career was based on the death of others, rather than on any force or talents in himself. The death in 1700 of Charles II. of Spain, the last surviving male of the Spanish branch of the Habsburg family, completely changed young Charles's life, for Charles of Spain had died without any children, leaving his country to a Bourbon, Philip, Duke of Anjou, who later became Philip V. of Spain.

Leopold I., fanatical Habsburg that he was, decided to contest the throne of Spain for his second son, Charles. Leopold was not deterred by the fact that the Bourbons were as closely related to the late King of Spain as was his own son. Louis XIV., too, was a grandson of Philip III. of Spain and a son-in-law of Philip IV. To achieve his ends, furthermore, Leopold did not hesitate to make war on France, though he was, at the same time, fighting the Turks.

Charles was crowned King Charles III. of Spain in Vienna in 1703, two years after the Grand Alliance against France had been concluded between England, Holland, and Austria. In a magnificent progress Charles proceeded to his new country, travelling by way of the Netherlands, England, where he was received by Queen Anne, and Portugal. He settled in Catalonia, where the Habsburgs had been followers. Throughout the War of the Spanish Succession, throughout his life, in fact, Charles loved Spain, and he never overcame his bitter disappointment at the Peace of Utrecht in 1713 which decided the war in favour of the Bourbons. Charles was not really comforted by the fact that in this peace the Spanish Netherlands, Mantua, Milan, Sardinia

—which Charles later exchanged for Sicily—and Naples were conceded to Austria and thus to the Habsburgs. He was so bitterly disappointed at losing the Spanish crown that he considered the provinces he had gained merely as a small part of the kingdom he had lost, and not as an addition to the Habsburgs' Austrian territories. He governed them as Spanish domains, thus preventing their effectual assimilation to Austria.

Charles was so distressed by the loss of Spain that he had no presentiment of the trouble the so-called Barrier Treaty of 1715, which followed the Peace of Utrecht, would cause his successors. This treaty, which later led to the beginning of the Seven Years War, stipulated that, though the Spanish Netherlands were ceded to Austria, the barrier towns, occupied by the troops of the Maritime Powers, were to bear the brunt of any attacks made by France. These towns as, J. F. Bright says, became the bulwark against the advance of France, and yet the Low Countries, governed by Austria and financed with Austrian money, were to raise the taxes needed to maintain these foreign troops.

In his personal habits, too, Charles showed that he never forgot that he had lost Spain. At formal Court functions in Vienna he wore a short Spanish coat of black material trimmed with lace, a large hat decorated with plumes, which was bent back *à l'Espagnol*, and his stockings and shoes were red.

Actually, Charles had been forced to leave his beloved Spain two years before the Peace of Utrecht was declared. His brother Joseph, who had succeeded their father in 1705, died of small-pox in 1711. He had left only two daughters, and Charles was abruptly summoned from his struggle for a hypothetical throne in Spain to become the ruler of Austria's vast territories and the candidate

for the Imperial election. Charles had been away from Austria for seven years and he was completely absorbed by his stubborn defence of his Spanish rights. At first he declined to accept his new responsibilities. His brother had died in April and it was not until the end of September that he finally consented to leave Spain. He went first to Frankfort, where he was crowned as Holy Roman Emperor, and then proceeded to Vienna.

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It had originally been planned that Charles was to marry Caroline of Anspach, who was later the wife of George II. of England. Caroline, however, had refused to give up her Lutheran faith and become a convert to Roman Catholicism. Elisabeth-Christina of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel was then chosen by Leopold for his son Charles. Elisabeth-Christina, too, did not willingly turn her back on Protestantism, but she was finally persuaded by Leibniz and others that " in the spirit " she could interpret Roman Catholicism as she chose.

She was sixteen when, in 1707, she was betrothed to Charles. She had never seen her future husband, who was then in Spain. In the summer of 1707, Elisabeth-Christina travelled in state to Vienna where, it was hoped, " she would have a better opportunity to continue the religious instruction " in her new faith. In October, Charles's emissary arrived from Spain to present his respects to her. Spanish was spoken at this interview, for Charles was determined to make a Spanish Queen out of her.

Charles and Elisabeth-Christina were married by proxy in the parish church at Hietzing, near Vienna, in April 1708. Joseph, in place of the groom, stepped to the altar beside her. On April 25 Elisabeth-Christina, who was later to be known to history chiefly as the

mother of Maria Theresa, left for Spain with an enormous following. There were ninety carriages and wagons and four hundred and five horses in her train.

Historians are agreed that Elisabeth-Christina was a woman of unusual beauty. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, the wife of the English Ambassador in Constantinople, who frequently saw the Emperor Charles and his wife in Vienna in 1716, was enthusiastic about her. Lady Mary thought her "the most beautiful Princess on earth."

"I was perfectly charmed with the Empress," Lady Mary writes. "I cannot, however, tell you that her features are regular; her eyes are not large, but have a lively look full of sweetness; her complexion is the finest I ever saw, her nose and forehead well made, but her mouth has ten thousand charms that touch the soul. When she smiles, 'tis with a beauty and sweetness that forces adoration. She has a vast quantity of fine fair hair, but then her person! One must speak of it poetically to do it rigid justice; all that the poets have said of the mien of Juno, the air of Venus, come not up to the truth. The Graces move with her, the famous statue of Medicis was not formed with more delicate proportions; nothing can be added to the beauty of her neck and hands. Till I saw them, I did not believe that there were any in nature so perfect, and I was almost sorry that my rank here did not permit me to kiss them; but they are kissed sufficiently, for everybody that waits on her pays that homage at their entrance, and when they take leave."

Even phlegmatic Charles was struck by his wife's beauty when he first saw her after her arrival in Spain. Their first meeting was arranged at Mataro, two miles north of Barcelona. Elisabeth-Christina had reached

Mataro on July 25, but with his usual slowness and deliberation Charles did not arrive until three days later. "Dawdling" is the word used by Macaulay to express Charles's movements. It probably never occurred to Charles that this very young girl might be nervous in the utterly strange surroundings of a foreign country.

After their meeting they spent five hours alone together, and the young King, who was then twenty-three, was pleased with her. With characteristic brevity, for unfortunately for historians none of the Habsburgs had a predilection for writing long letters or reminiscences, Charles recorded this first encounter with his wife. "Rode to Mataro," he noted briefly in his diary that evening, "Queen very beautiful. Am entirely content." A few days later, also in his diary, Charles really let himself go, for he wrote four enthusiastic words: "Queen night very sweet."

To his wife's father and mother Charles wrote letters expressing his satisfaction. "I want at once," he wrote, "to tell you how happy I am. I had already heard many praise the charms which have won for her the affection of the people, but now that I have seen her, all I had heard seems like a shadow as compared with 'L'éclat du soleil.' Words fail me in which to express her rare and precious qualities, as well as to express all the happiness I feel."

Elisabeth-Christina proved to be a wife with good common sense and a great deal of judgment. She realised that young as he was, Charles's character was already set: he would never change, and she would not be able to influence him. She did not object when, puritanical as he was in many ways, he continued to maintain his liaison with the Countess Althann after their

marriage. Elisabeth-Christina expressed an interest in politics only when her husband told her to do so. While he was with his armies, however, she often acted as his regent, and after he was summoned to Vienna she remained in Spain until March 1713 to take his place. Prince Anton Lichtenstein and Count Guido Starhemberg stayed in Catalonia as her advisers, and it is reported that she performed her duties most efficiently.

Though the young Queen was wise enough to realise that she could never change Charles's character and she philosophically accepted him as he was, she was sometimes perturbed "because he did not give her his full confidence." Always he seemed to be holding something back, for, like many small-minded men, he was suspicious and extremely jealous of his power. Besides, he was fast developing that passion for detail work, which later obsessed him. He could not bear to have any one else attend to the most trivial act of his rule; he was jealous even of his wife.

When Elisabeth-Christina returned to Vienna from Spain, where she had enjoyed her political responsibilities, she demonstrated her rare common sense and her profound insight into her husband's character. She did not mention the fact that she had been his regent, she pretended that politics had never entered her life. She devoted herself entirely to being a model wife, a good mother, and a popular Queen.

On the whole, their marriage was a success; at least it was never actively unhappy, except that Elisabeth-Christina did not bear as many children as Charles had wanted. It must have been distressing for her to have him mention again and again that he was the last surviving male of the Habsburgs.

During the first nine years of their marriage, Elisabeth

Christina was childless. Then, at last, in April 1716, a son, Leopold, was born, but he died in infancy. Lady Mary Montagu, judging by her letters a most sensible woman who had many children herself, speaks of the "tragical end of an only son, born after being so long desired, and at length killed by want of good management: weaning him in the beginning of the winter."

The year after the infant Leopold's death, on May 13, 1717, another child was born to Charles and to Elisabeth-Christina, and he was again near despair when this child was a girl. They called her Maria Theresa, after Theresa de Cepeda, the sixteenth-century saint of Old Castile, and went on hoping for a son. In 1718, however, another daughter, Marianne, was born, and in 1724, the birth of Maria Amalia, who lived to be only five years old, made Charles wonder whether he would ever have a male successor.

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The thought that the Habsburg family might die out, the dynasty come to an end, that their territories might be divided, their power cease, was terrifying for a Habsburg. Though Leopold I., Charles's father, had two sons, he was haunted until his death by the fear that they might die without male issue, and this fear was strengthened by the fact that when Leopold was ageing, Joseph had no son, and Charles, at the time, was not yet married. Leopold, therefore, passed a law according to which, should both his sons die without male heirs, the succession was to pass on from them to their daughters. Joseph the elder's daughters were, of course, given precedence.

When Charles's marriage to Elisabeth-Christina had remained childless for five years and there seemed no hope that this situation would change, his tormenting

anxiety about the succession became articulate. He was growing bitter towards Providence; at best he might one day have a daughter. His father's law appointing Joseph's elder daughter as the heir to the throne began to obsess him, and he resented the fact that Maria Josepha or Maria Amalia, who were still children, might in the future take precedence over his own unborn children.

Charles finally decided to modify Leopold's Law. This decision must have been very painful for Charles. His conceptions of a son's duties were very strict, but his selfish desire that his own children—if he had any—and not Joseph's daughter should succeed him finally overcame his scruples. On September 19, 1713, Charles summoned all of his ministers, his privy councillors, Prince Eugene, his great general, and other Court dignitaries, and announced to them a "Pragmatic Sanction," which was duly recorded by von Schick, one of the councillors. The Pragmatic Sanction remained a Court secret until December 1724, when his third daughter was born. In this Sanction Charles declared that if he died without male heirs, but left a daughter, the Habsburgs' family dominions were to be inherited by her. Superficially, this Sanction did not differ very markedly from Leopold's old Law. When, however, the Emperor's intention became clear, and his councillors realised that if he later had children, but no sons, his daughter and not Joseph's was to succeed him, they understood the purpose of this Pragmatic Sanction. But as, at this time, Charles had been married for several years and had no children, his decision, which was to be kept a Court secret, seemed of theoretical importance only.

Later, when Joseph's daughters were married—

Maria Josepha to Frederick Augustus of Saxony, and Maria Amalia to Charles Albert of Bavaria—and their husbands showed an aggressive interest in the Habsburgs' heritage, the cleverness of Charles's Pragmatic Sanction became apparent. For if either of these German Princes, through his wife, had been the heir, Austria would have been joined with Bavaria or Saxony. From this point of view, Charles was consistent when he later married his eldest daughter Maria Theresa to a man without a country, a man who had been forced to surrender his own dukedom, Lorraine, and become entirely Austrian with no other loyalties.

Charles had a childlike faith in the validity of treaties and sanctions, but he realised that his Pragmatic Sanction might be contested after his death. He therefore devoted his chief energies from 1724, when the Sanction was first made public, until his death in 1740 to urging other European countries to acknowledge it.

Alfred von Arneth, the greatest Maria Theresa scholar of the nineteenth century, remarks quite rightly that Charles's exclusive devotion to the *idée fixe* of the Pragmatic Sanction was his most outstanding characteristic. In his youth his mind was centred on the conquest of Spain ; later his desire to have his Pragmatic Sanction ratified made all other considerations seem of secondary importance. The foreign policies of his rule were dominated by his fanatic concern with the Pragmatic Sanction.

Prince Eugene, who successfully defended Austria against the Turks, tried to persuade Charles that it would be better to base the Pragmatic Sanction on a strong army than on documents, but Charles stubbornly continued to negotiate for a formal recognition of his Sanction. He was, in fact, willing to make concessions

to European powers for their signatures. England, for instance, agreed only on condition that Charles gave up his new fleet. Finally, in 1731, Spain, Russia, Prussia, England, the Netherlands, Denmark, Bavaria, and Saxony had all signed the Pragmatic Sanction, promising to recognise Charles's daughter, Maria Theresa, as his successor.

CHAPTER TWO

A LESS phlegmatic man than Charles VI., who at thirty-one reacted to life like a disappointed man past middle age, would have been made fidgety and nervous by the tension which prevailed in Vienna towards the end of 1716. Apart from the international complications, which would have seemed like a labyrinth in some nightmare to a more imaginative man, he was anxiously awaiting the birth of an heir. His wife was at last pregnant again and he hardly dared contemplate the tragedy it would mean for him if the child was a daughter. He had privately passed the Pragmatic Sanction three years before, but Europe had not yet been informed of this decisive step, and Charles was not yet sure that the other powers would ratify this sanction.

Apart from these anxieties about the succession, Charles was particularly worried about the dominions granted him by the Peace of Utrecht, for, as Voltaire said, " the futility of politics became even more apparent after the Peace of Utrecht than during the War."

Philip V. of Spain, encouraged in his plans by his wife Elisabeth of Parma and by Alberoni, his clever Italian adviser, had refused to recognise the Peace, and Charles was constantly expecting to hear that he had invaded Sicily, which, in fact, he did in 1717. Luckily, for Charles, however, Louis XIV. had died in 1715. It was possible that Duke Philip of Orleans, who was acting as young Louis XV.'s Regent, and who opposed Philip, would actively support Charles's claims under the Peace of Utrecht.

After anxious months of waiting in 1716, the Duke of Orleans, early in January 1717, finally joined Holland and Great Britain in a Triple Alliance to defend the Peace of Utrecht. This was a tremendous relief to Charles, for he knew that with such strong allies he would eventually defeat Philip. He later joined France, the Netherlands, and Great Britain, and the Triple Alliance then became the Quadruple Alliance. At the Peace at the Hague in 1720, when Charles exchanged Sicily for Sardinia, Philip's ambitious plans were finally frustrated.

In 1716, Charles was also engaged in a war against the Turks. Encouraged by their successes against Russia, the Turks had attacked Venice and the "Morea." The Republic had asked for the Emperor's assistance. As a Turkish victory would have been disastrous for Austria, Prince Eugene was sent to Hungary with an army of 100,000 men, and he defeated a Turkish army twice this size at Peterwardein and captured Temesvar, the Banat, and Wallachia. Prince Eugene was in Vienna on May 12, when Maria Theresa was born, and he left the city for a new campaign two days after her birth. With his army of 60,000 men he defeated a Turkish army of 200,000 and captured Belgrade. In July of the next year, in 1718, at the Peace of Passarovitz, he secured for Austria the captured territories—Serbia, including Belgrade, and a part of Bosnia. Maria Theresa, in other words, was born at that period of her country's history when the Habsburgs' Imperialism, reaching forth as it did, not to overseas possessions but to the Balkans, was laying the corner-stone of the modern Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

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It was typical of Charles that on the night from the

12th to the 13th of May, when his wife's confinement was imminent, and the *Hofburg* was buzzing with excitement, he was not in his own apartments anxiously awaiting the news of his child's birth. Nor was he in his study, receiving in audience Prince Eugene or his other officers who were to leave Vienna the next day to fight what would obviously be a decisive battle against the Turks.

Neither personal nor political anxieties caused Charles sleepless nights or determined him to give up his pleasures, especially hunting. He is a striking illustration of the fact that men without imagination are fortunate creatures. On this fateful night he was sleeping soundly and untroubled in his hunting lodge at Laxenburg, and he had to be awakened by the messenger who came from Vienna to tell him that his child was expected within a few hours.

The population of Vienna did not await this event as calmly as Charles. The Emperor's agitated longing for a son must have communicated itself to his people, and they, too, had been fervently hoping that a male heir to the Habsburg dominions would be born at last. Until the Empress's recent pregnancy, the people had not been comforted by the fact that the Emperor was still young and that she was only twenty-five. For the death of the infant Leopold seemed to indicate that Fate was against this young couple.

Early in the morning when it became known that Elisabeth-Christina's child would soon be born, a huge crowd had collected in the streets and squares round the *Hofburg*. Later the large bell of Saint Stephen's Church, a bell made of the metal of captured Turkish guns, announced that the infant had been safely born, but it was not until some time had elapsed that the great

portals of the palace were opened and a courtier announced that the child was a healthy girl. For a moment there was silence. Then the crowd broke out into loud and prolonged cheers, welcoming this heiress to the Habsburgs: Maria Theresa's advent was acknowledged by her people.

Charles was too proud to show his disappointment. Grimani, the Minister from Venice to Austria, wrote to his government: "In the hearts of the Emperor and his people grief and hope have been striving to get the upper hand. It puzzles me to know whether we are now celebrating the birth of this Princess or continuing the period of mourning for her infant brother Leopold, who was regarded as one of Heaven's most precious gifts. However, I went with Monseigneur the Papal Nuncio to congratulate His Majesty according to our custom, and to express the wish that the ensuing year might bring him more perfect consolation. He received us with his customary courtesy, but it was obvious that he would have been better pleased to be the father of a Prince."

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Relatively little is known of Maria Theresa's childhood, and some of her romantic biographers have been tempted to write purely imaginative accounts of her early youth. Few authentic anecdotes have been handed down to us.

It is known, however, that Maria Theresa did not present any problems to her parents as far as her health was concerned. In an age of appalling infant mortality, when only strong children survived, Maria Theresa was amazingly healthy. She was a slender little girl with huge grey eyes, yellow hair, which she wore parted in the middle, a high forehead, regular features, and an

underlip which tended to protrude, like the underlips of most of the Habsburgs.

Physically she would have been equal to the most strenuous " man's education." As she later proved, she could stand far greater physical strains than most of her male contemporaries on the thrones of Europe, and when her health finally gave way, purely from over-exertion throughout her life, she accepted her ill-health philosophically. " I cannot complain," she wrote when she was fifty; " human beings must finally cease to be. I was entirely healthy for fifty years."

Unfortunately, less is known about her mind during her childhood than about her health. Undoubtedly this is largely because she did not do or say anything particularly worthy of notice. Even the most trivial infantile utterances of many heirs-apparent are dutifully recorded, but Charles's pathetic hopes that he might still have a son caused him to be less interested in her than he would have been had he, in his heart, accepted her as his heir from her birth. Besides, she was born in a very agitated period of her Family's history; there are more detailed reports, for instance, of the siege of Belgrade, which occurred the year of her birth, than of her first efforts to walk or to talk. Her country was almost continuously at war, and Charles and his Court were more interested in his immediate military campaigns than in his daughter's progress.

Charles was not concerned with her psychological development. He remembered facts and ceremonies and not human reactions to them. The fact that Count Sigismund von Kallonitsch had led the singing of " Herr Gott, Dich loben wir," in Saint Stephen's Church a few hours after Maria Theresa's birth remained more vividly in Charles's memory than any of his daughter's youthful

characteristics. And the *Wiener Diarium* gives a painfully detailed account of her baptism, which occurred when she was less than twelve hours old.

In the *Rittersaal* in the *Hofburg*, for the Palace chapel was too small, she was duly christened Maria Theresa Walpurga Amalia Christina, and the two dowager Empresses—Leopold I.'s widow, Eleanore, and Joseph I.'s widow, Maria Amalia—were her godmothers. It is rather a depressing thought that the Empress Eleanore gave her some valuable relics of Saint Theresa as a baptismal gift, and that the Empress Maria Amalia, not to be outdone in this religious fervour, laid the corner-stone for a Convent on the Rennweg, the Salesian Convent, in memory of her niece's christening. From the very beginning Maria Theresa's life was guided into dull, religious, and serious channels.

Charles gave this baptism a political as well as a religious significance. His Pragmatic Sanction, the fact that this infant, if Elisabeth-Christina bore him no male heir, was to inherit the throne of the Habsburgs, was not yet generally known, even at his own Court. Leopold's Law remained officially in force, and Joseph's elder daughter was accepted as Charles's heir if he died without a son.

At Maria Theresa's baptism, Charles for the first time prepared the world for the Pragmatic Sanction. He proclaimed his intentions: carried on soft cushions by Prince Lichtenstein, so the *Wiener Diarium* records, the infant preceded Joseph's daughters and followed the Emperor as the procession moved up the nave of the Church to the baptismal font.

Of course it was not absolutely necessary to interpret this order in the procession as a serious political gesture. After all, it was Maria Theresa's christening, her great day, the first day of her life, in fact. Most of the

courtiers who were present, however, who knew how fussy Charles was in the execution of every Court ceremony, and who had heard rumours from his councillors about the Pragmatic Sanction, must have understood what Charles meant.

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If Charles was annoyed with Maria Theresa because she was not a son, he did not show it. She was not made to suffer an unhappy childhood because he had been disappointed. He was never harsh or intentionally unkind to her. Her youth was not overshadowed by that terrible paternal cruelty which formed the character and in the end dominated the life of Maria Theresa's contemporary and lifelong enemy, Frederick the Great of Prussia.

Maria Theresa was in awe of her father, and constantly impressed by the authority he represented, for even in her childhood she worshipped Authority, but she was never afraid of him. It is recorded that when she was six years old she was taken to a window in the *Hofburg* to watch the passing of a religious procession. She had never before, at least consciously, seen her father in his gorgeous robes of State, and when he passed under the window, she is said to have clapped her hands and shouted at him urging him to come to her so that she could see him more closely. Her nurses, often chagrined by her impulsiveness, reprimanded her, but she went on calling to him.

Though Charles was never cruel like Frederick William of Prussia, the great Frederick's father, he was always unimaginative. He was dictatorial because, often unable to make decisions himself, he asserted himself by demanding prompt action from those dependent on him, especially from his children. He was

not a bully like Frederick William, he was merely severe because he was unsure of himself. As Prince Eugene said of the three Habsburgs whom he served: "Leopold was like a father to me; Joseph like a brother, and Charles like a master."

As a matter of fact, Charles did not interfere with Maria Theresa very much during her childhood. He clung stubbornly to his secret hopes of one day having a son, and he would not yet allow himself to admit that his eldest daughter was really his successor, who should be trained as the future ruler of the Habsburg Empire.

When Maria Theresa was old enough to be taught to read and write, Charles, who still hoped that Destiny would give him a son, seemed to feel that he would be tempting Providence if he gave Maria Theresa a boy's education. A number of eminent scholars, all Jesuits, with the exception of her mathematics master, were summoned to Vienna to be her teachers, but the Emperor did not wish them to burden her with as much knowledge as a son would have needed. She was to be educated to become a womanly woman, a graceful and tactful Princess who would, one day, make a good *hausfrau* and wife for some prince or ruler. She was taught accomplishments rather than learning.

She was never given the training which would have been helpful to the future ruler of one of the most complicated and difficult dynasties of Europe. She was never taught the technique and the art of government, and though she was always a normally intelligent child, she had no particular curiosity about the affairs of State. The slight smattering of political information she acquired before she became a ruling Queen she picked up from casual conversations overheard at the Court, or from her mother.

Elisabeth-Christina was more far-sighted than her husband, and less optimistic about an unborn son, and she was worried when she realised that her daughter was not being properly educated as a future sovereign. The Empress and her old friend, the Countess Fuchs, Maria Theresa's and her younger sister Marianne's governess, tried in vain to rouse the Archduchess's interest in political affairs. The child listened politely when problems of State were discussed with her, or in her presence, but she never asked questions or thought about these dull political matters when she could avoid them.

Actually, of course, Maria Theresa's childhood was happier and more natural than it would have been had her father treated her as an heir, who had to be taught something every hour from morning until night, and whose every utterance was preserved for posterity. She and her younger sister were simply "Reserl and Mariandl," who tried to get out of learning their lessons, enjoyed their games, went to see their devout Aunt Amalia in her convent, or played with their older cousins. Marianne, who usually gave in to Maria Theresa, was an ideal younger sister. She was, as Robinson said, "all meekness and mildness" and "a good sister." The little girls were allowed one boyish game : shooting at a target, for Charles had infected even his wife with a passionate fondness for hunting and shooting.

Long before Maria Theresa's first communion, at the Church of Maria Zell in 1728 when she was nine years old, she was taught that religion was the most important part of life. She never, until the end, doubted the absolute Truth of Roman Catholicism. She was a profoundly religious child, and though she lived in the age of cynicism, she always remained a sincere believer,

who carried out the forms prescribed by her Church because they meant something to her, and not because these devotional exercises were the proper and expected gestures.

All of her tutors encouraged her religious interests and imbued her with a tremendous feeling of awe for the authority of the Church. By temperament, even as a child, she was a curious mixture of Roman Catholicism and of puritanism. She adopted as her motto *Justicia et Clementia*, but throughout her life she was frequently more just than she was charitable. Her intense religious ardour made her hard.

As she sincerely and passionately loved her God, the pious atmosphere of the Court did not irk her as it would have done many other children; she felt no desire to rebel against the strict observance of every Saint's day. The rigid religious ceremony at Charles's Court seemed intolerable even to many good Catholics, but young Maria Theresa adored all ritual. She would have been deeply shocked had she seen a letter which the Duc de Richelieu, who was then, as a young man in his thirties, the French Ambassador in Vienna, wrote to Cardinal de Polignac in Rome:

"In Vienna, during all of Lent," Richelieu wrote, "I have led an astonishingly pious existence, which has not left me a quarter of an hour of liberty. I admit frankly that if I had known in advance what sort of life an Ambassador must lead in Vienna, nothing on earth would have persuaded me to come here."

From her earliest youth, Maria Theresa interpreted everything she saw or heard from the religious point of view. God was a prominent Figure looming up benignly and yet severely in the background of all her studies. Even though she was not interested in her lessons, her

religion in the person of Father Vogel told her that she must learn them.

She was not entirely bored by history, and she had a remarkable talent for languages; Latin, the official language of Hungary, was included in her curriculum. Her linguistic gifts are often mentioned by her respectful biographers because, in other studies, she never excelled. She lacked the proverbial German thoroughness and never mastered the rules of grammar or of spelling. To the end of her life her letters, in whatever language she wrote, were full of ungrammatical passages and spelling mistakes. She was never a brilliant scholar; she showed no marked intellectual curiosity, and the shrewdness which was a far greater asset to her in her maturity than book-learning could have been, had not yet developed.

Perhaps had her lessons been more inspiring, she might have been a more promising pupil. The notebooks containing her history-masters' curriculum can still be seen in the Court Library in Vienna. First comes Biblical history; then follow outlines of the history of Babylonia, Persia, Greece, and Rome. The teaching was summarised in the dullest of questions: "Which of the ten earliest patriarchs lived before the Flood, and which of them lived after it?"—Or: "By how many years is Methuselah older than Adam?"—"Which of the Persian Kings were killed in a tower of ashes?"—"How many Triumvirates existed in Rome?"

Maria Theresa never resented the dull educational methods of her teachers, and she was obviously quite content with the programme in which accomplishments and social talents were considered far more important for a girl than knowledge or the ability to think independently.

She was charming and tactful and she had a natural gift for social life, but the intricate ways of her father's ceremonious Court, too, had to be studied. It was extremely important to remember who took precedence over whom at a function at the *Hofburg*. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was highly amused when she found how seriously the courtiers took their rank in Vienna.

"'Tis not long since," she once wrote, "that two coaches meeting in the narrow street at night, the ladies in them not being able to adjust the ceremonial of which would go back, sat there with equal gallantry till two in the morning, and were both so fully determined to die upon the spot rather than yield in a point of that importance, that the street would never have been cleared till their deaths, if the Emperor had not sent his guards to part them, and even then they refused to stir, till the expedient could be found out by taking them both out in chairs, exactly in the same moment."

Maria Theresa, who was later to be so tactless with her own family, knew instinctively how to propitiate strangers. Even as a child she showed that she was a born diplomat. "Always," Foscarini, the Venetian Ambassador in Vienna once wrote of her, "she says and does the right thing." At a very early age she understood the rigid etiquette at the Court and she often contributed to the entertainment of the courtiers. All her contemporaries agree that she had a charming voice, she was a good dancer, and her paintings done when she was a very young girl show that she was very proficient.

When she performed in amateur theatricals at the Court, every one was delighted. "She was marvellous," her mother once wrote to her brother in Brunswick; and Molitaris, a visitor in Vienna, grew lyrical after one of

her performances. "I can truthfully say," he wrote, "that never in my entire life have I seen anything more beautiful, more moving, and more perfect than her Royal Highness when she sang and danced."

Maria Theresa was, in fact, acquiring all the graces and the manners of a successful Princess. She was being trained to be a young lady in the dullest sense of the word, and it is one of the most remarkable facts about this remarkable woman that when the time came, she was able to change from a mere Court lady, from a disinterested observer of politics, into a woman of action and of independent views.

It is difficult to say at what point or through what experience in her early youth she began to think. Probably her mind was maturing gradually, though this process was not obvious to outside observers until she came to the throne. Undoubtedly also she had been taught that it is not a woman's place to express an opinion about politics. But by the time she was eighteen, when she herself knew she was the Habsburg heir, she had become markedly ambitious, and she sometimes showed signs of her future perspicacity and judgment. Sir Thomas Robinson, then the English Minister in Vienna, to whom she admitted that she was more interested in affairs of State than a young lady should be, wrote in 1735 to Lord Harrington: "She is a princess of the highest spirit; her father's losses are her own; she admires his virtues but condemns his mismanagement; and is of a temper so formed for rule and ambition as to look upon him as little more than her administrator."

CHAPTER THREE

In the summer of 1723, Charles VI. went to Prague with his wife and Maria Theresa, who was then six years old. Heretofore Charles had been content simply to assume the title of "King of Bohemia," but he now thought that he should be formally crowned in State. He had by no means given up all hope of having a son—in fact, his youngest daughter was not born until a year later—but he decided that it would be politic to present his elder daughter to his Bohemian subjects.

Maria Theresa's entire private life was determined by this journey, for while she was in Prague she met her future husband, Francis Stephen of Lorraine, who was then fourteen. Throughout her life her personal emotions were centred on this man and on the children she bore him. Her affections never strayed; she was fiercely, though not always, successfully possessive in her feelings towards him, and from the time when she was six years old he dominated her affections and her imagination. She never experienced the romantic fantasies which help most young people through the difficult period of adolescence.

When Maria Theresa was old enough to think of marriage, she was determined to marry Francis or no one. In her struggle to win her father's approval of such a union, she showed for the first time that she was a more wilful and a more forceful personality than her charming manners had led people to believe.

During her early youth Charles considered many

possible husbands for her. He was always conscious of his ancestors' reputation for cleverness, and he did not want posterity to say of him that he lacked the Habsburgs' shrewdness in making wise marriages.

At one time he thought of marrying his daughter to one of two German Princes: Prince Charles Albrecht of Bavaria, her cousin, and Frederick of Prussia. The fact that he contemplated these unions indicated more forcefully than words could have done that Charles had learned to appreciate the importance and the urgent necessity of consolidating the power of the Habsburgs within Germany. Formerly, when the domination of his Family had been unquestioned in Central Europe, the Habsburgs had married off their children to princes from ruling houses outside Germany, thus adding new territories to their Empire.

Seckendorf, the Austrian Ambassador in Berlin, was enthusiastic about a marriage between Charles's eldest daughter and Crown Prince Frederick. If Charles and Frederick William of Prussia had agreed, if it had been possible for Maria Theresa to renounce Catholicism and become a Lutheran, if Frederick had been psychologically able to live a normal married life and had married Maria Theresa, the entire course of European history would have been different during the last two hundred years. Such a marriage, in fact, presents one of the most fascinating "ifs" of modern history, for without the bitter rivalry between Prussia and Austria the problems presented by Central Europe to-day would not exist. And if Maria Theresa and Frederick had been married, Frederick the Great's character would certainly have been influenced by Maria Theresa. For even as a young girl she was not the sort of woman to submit meekly to being relegated to the lonely palace,

to which he exiled Elizabeth-Christina of Brunswick-Bevern, who was his wife only in name.

Another candidate considered for Maria Theresa's husband was the Spanish Infante Don Carlos, who later became Charles III. of Spain. This marriage was proposed by Sinzendorf, Charles's Chancellor, and by Elisabeth Farnese, the second wife of Philip V. of Spain. Charles was still passionately attached to Spanish customs, but his complicated relations with the Spanish Bourbons were beginning to exhaust him. Besides, Bartenstein, his most influential and most unpleasant Minister, a self-made courtier who was eaten up by jealousy and ambition, was antagonistic to this plan, and that settled the matter as far as Charles was concerned. For as Robinson quite rightly pointed out to the British Foreign Office almost immediately after his arrival from London: "I am very far mistaken if Bartenstein does not in a great measure direct the councils of this Court."

Before Maria Theresa was five years old her father had half made up his mind to marry her to Clement, the heir to the Dukedom of Lorraine, and throughout the years when Charles was considering other candidates, he never quite abandoned this idea. Though Lorraine was a French Province, the reigning dukes had for decades been more loyal to the Holy Roman Emperors than to the Kings of France. Clement's grandfather, Duke Charles, who had served the Habsburgs during their wars against the Turks, had married Eleanor of Austria, a sister of Emperor Leopold I.

This marriage appealed to Charles VI. personally, for he knew the Lorraine family well, and he loved familiar faces and institutions. He himself had been educated with young Clement's father, Duke Leopold, and a

marriage between his daughter and the son of his childhood friend seemed natural and proper. Incidentally, so Charles VI. was informed, Clement was an intelligent and clever youth, but the personal attributes of his daughter's future husband were, of course, minor considerations.

Prince Eugene and many of Charles's other advisers hoped that this marriage would be arranged when Maria Theresa was older, but Clement died suddenly in June 1723 of small-pox. It is a curious fact that Maria Theresa's destiny was in a way determined by this disease. Her father would not have become the ruler of Austria, nor she his successor, if her uncle Joseph I. had not succumbed to small-pox; she herself might have developed into a less one-sided character if she had married the highly intelligent Clement instead of his more mediocre and easy-going brother Francis.

In the eighteenth century people were, of course, acutely conscious of the influence of this scourge. But for it, Louis XV., for instance, would never have become King of France. When, therefore, it was suggested to Charles VI. that Clement be replaced at once by his younger brother Francis, the Emperor's hesitation was partly due to his fear that young Francis, who had not yet had small-pox, might be carried off at any moment by the disease.

Within a few weeks, however, Charles had agreed at least to receive Francis and to look him over. For when Charles had once made a decision, it was a tremendous effort for him to direct his mind into any other direction, and he was reluctant to turn his thoughts from the Lorraine family. As Maria Theresa was only six years old, her father absolutely refused to commit himself to Duke Leopold, who was urging his son's suit, but

he invited Francis and his tutors to join him in Prague so that he could see for himself what the boy was like. If he did not approve of him, Charles argued, he could always send him back to Lorraine. And as the lad would have been received in Bohemia, the gossiping Court at Vienna would never have seen him.

Before leaving Lorraine, in the meantime, Francis had been most carefully coached about his behaviour in the presence of the Emperor. Baron Jacquemin, the Minister from Lorraine in Vienna, wrote a memorandum on the subject of the youth's deportment to Duke Leopold. This letter still exists:

"It is necessary that the young Prince should assume a respectful expression in the presence of the Emperor," Jacquemin wrote; "he must restrain his vivacity and not speak unless the Emperor speaks to him first; he must avoid a familiar manner when talking to the Emperor. Above all, he must never ask the Emperor any questions on any subject, and he must talk German as much as he possibly can. When he is with the Empress he can be a little more vivacious, but he must never forget the dignity expected of a Prince in his station—if he remembers this, the Empress and her ladies will mention his fine spirit to the Emperor, who will then feel a sincere wish to see his natural vivacity which, if mingled with the proper respect, will please the Emperor, and then every one at the Court will approve of the Prince."

As this letter indicates, Francis's boisterous manner often annoyed his elders. Count Podewils, the Prussian Minister in Vienna, later remarked that "Francis hated restraint" and "that he had almost too little dignity for his rank." Francis was a very handsome youth, "of tall stature," Podewils continues,

though " his carriage and walk are somewhat careless." He had large dark-blue eyes, a straight nose, a small and well-shaped mouth, and he knew instinctively how to make the most of his pleasant appearance.

His father misjudged both the boy's ambition and his ability to deal with people. Duke Leopold need not have been anxious about his son's behaviour during his first decisive interview with the Emperor. Even as a youth Francis's easy approach to strangers, his obvious good-humour, made him a most popular companion. And when, as was now the case, he wanted to make a good impression on any one, he rarely failed. Francis had charm.

Besides, Francis was extremely fortunate in their first encounter on August 10, 1723. They met at the Emperor's hunting lodge at Trautmannsdorf Castle, near Prague, a most advantageous background for both of them. For Francis loved hunting as passionately as modern boys love motor-cycles; at home he had bored his tutors by his incessant talk about the hunts. Charles, in turn, was always particularly approachable when he was occupied with his favourite pastime. Francis did not have to pretend enthusiasm; in the hunting lodge his " fine spirit " was natural to him, and he sincerely respected the Emperor's prowess as a hunter.

Their love of hunting established a bond between them at once. Soon Charles was completely charmed by the boy, and this was no small achievement as Francis's German was extremely faulty, and Charles hated French. Like many sonless fathers, Charles became quite sentimental about Francis, and the Emperor was moved and worried when a slight indisposition made it impossible for Francis to travel to Vienna when the imperial party left Bohemia.

On September 2, before he left Prague, Charles wrote to Duke Leopold: "To justify your fatherly pride and without flattery I can truthfully say that this young gentleman is quite remarkable for one so young in years; he is clever in everything he does, his manners are good, he is obedient. You can thank God for him, and it is obvious, dear cousin, that he was brought up under your constant care and supervision. I can assure you that he is loved and admired by every one, and it is my greatest anxiety lest he is not waited on sufficiently here and that he will remain healthy. I have therefore taken the liberty of telling the doctor all about his special needs. Then I am worried lest he find life dull with us; I have also advised his regular studies to be continued, as this is very necessary for young people."

When Duke Leopold had read this outburst of enthusiasm he undoubtedly expected a definite proposal of marriage for his son. Charles, however, sentimental though he was about the lad, was obviously determined not to commit himself, and he continued his letter in general phrases of friendship—phrases which could be interpreted as veiled proposals, but which contained nothing definite.

"My dearest cousin," Charles wrote to Leopold on another occasion, "we are such close friends, we are really related, we were educated together; besides, my personal affection and respect for you are so great that I believe (though it does not yet seem quite time) that I shall in the future trust and confide in you even more, and you must know that I am your faithful cousin. The best means to maintain our friendship would be to unite our families even more closely; for a long time this has been my intention and my plan; and I shall not change my mind, especially as I think I can assume

from your letters that your thoughts and desires are similar to mine. Because, however, the two human beings who could unite us more closely are not yet old enough, I want you (if you have nothing against it) at least to know that one day I hope to unite our houses in an even closer friendship. From now on you will, therefore, be sure of my intentions."

As far as Charles was concerned the wording of this letter was quite safe. Later, if he changed his mind, he could always, if necessary, offer his younger daughter to Duke Leopold. Maria Theresa, his heir, had never been mentioned by name. In view of his great precaution in this letter, it is curious that when Francis came to Vienna in December 1723, Charles gave him rooms in the *Hofburg* close to the apartments of the imperial family. Not only that, his attentions to the boy were so marked that he assigned to him the apartments in the palace formerly occupied by the Empress Eleanore, Leopold I.'s widow, and Francis's grandmother. Francis was, in other words, taken into the heart of the family at once.

Francis's education was planned as carefully as though he had been Charles's own son. Apart from a small regiment of tutors, two governors were appointed to supervise his training: Count Johann von Cobenzl and Count Neipperg, who was later one of Maria Theresa's Field-Marshals. Neipperg, who taught Francis military tactics, was not as efficient as he was generally considered to be, and it is obvious from Francis's later failures as a soldier that he learned little of strategy.

Francis was too fond of sport to be a good scholar. It is interesting to remember that he and another famous consort of history differed so radically in this respect. Prince Albert was at first unpopular in England because

he cared too little for sport, especially hunting, while Francis shocked his learned tutors because he was really interested in nothing else. Throughout his life Francis also loved practical jokes. Even when he later assumed the dignified responsibilities of a Holy Roman Emperor he was known to have surprised a young couple on their wedding evening. With several companions he broke into the house and gave them an impromptu party.

Francis was always bad at his lessons. His shocking spelling and handwriting evoked severe letters from his father until Leopold realised that the Emperor was more concerned with the boy's ability as a hunter than as a speller. Francis's French deteriorated in Austria, yet at the same time his German did not improve. As a contemporary pointed out when he was a grown man: "His French letters seem to have been written by a German, while his German correspondence might have been written by a Frenchman with a slight knowledge of foreign languages."

Francis always spent most of the summer at Charles's hunting lodge at Laxenburg. His tutors accompanied him, but he devoted little time to his studies. Cobenzl, however, a lax and optimistic teacher, assured Duke Leopold by letter that though the youth "hunted with the Emperor every morning at nine o'clock" and "again in the afternoon," this did not "interfere with his regular lessons in the least."

Charles would never have admitted to himself that he was interfering with his protégé's lessons. In theory the Emperor was actively interested in Francis's education. The Emperor gave orders that every six months the young Prince was to submit to an examination before a committee consisting of Cobenzl, Neipperg, Chancellor Sinzendorf, and several learned scholars.

Somehow or other the youth managed to satisfy his examiners. Perhaps he charmed them as he did the courtiers; perhaps these scholars were too much in awe of the Chancellor and the other tutors present to give him bad marks when he obviously satisfied those in power. At any rate, there is no record that Francis ever failed in any of these periodical examinations. He was a success at the Court of Vienna.

There is, unfortunately, no record of the first meeting in Prague of Francis and Maria Theresa, but her later attitude clearly shows that she succumbed to hero-worship from the start. During the six years that he lived at the *Hofburg* she must have seen him, or at least caught a glimpse of him, almost daily, in the courtyard of the Palace, in the passages, in the chapel during Mass. His physical strength, his friendly manner to every one, which later developed into a lack of discrimination, made him a splendid object of romantic attachment for a little girl who had no brothers and had therefore never learned to be critical of boys. He was an integral part of her life for as long as she could remember. From her earliest childhood she spoke of him with bated breath, listened in awe to the tales of his feats on the hunting field, was thrilled whenever she saw him.

By the time she was in her early teens she was seriously in love with him, and resolved to marry him. She apparently made no secret of her feelings, for Sir Thomas Robinson reported to Lord Harrington that " notwithstanding her lofty humour by day " she " sighs and pines all night for her Duke of Lorraine. If she sleeps it is only to dream of him, if she wakes it is but to talk of him to the lady-in-waiting; so that there is no more probability of her forgetting the very individual government, and the very individual husband which she

thinks herself born to, than of her forgiving the authors of her losing either."

It is not known what tactics she adopted to urge her father to give his definite consent to a formal engagement. It is certain, however, that her father's inability to make up his mind was extremely disturbing for her, and that her own determination was increased by his lack of decision. In 1729, when Francis was suddenly summoned to Lorraine by the death of his father, Maria Theresa was unhappy and worried, but her resolve to marry him never weakened.

Francis, who was now twenty-one, a ruling Duke and rather sure of himself, had fully expected some definite proposal from the Emperor before he left for Lorraine, but Charles was as non-communicative as he had been for years. Unlike Maria Theresa, Francis was not personally grieved by this parting or the postponement of their engagement. To him she was above all the heir to the Habsburg dynasty, and the fact that she was then young, beautiful, and very desirable was of secondary importance. Maria Theresa rarely recorded her private affairs in letters, and when she did her correspondents were instructed to destroy these letters at once. Even as a young girl, furthermore, she never had the foolish but pleasant habit of keeping a diary, for she never allowed herself the luxury of being foolish. It is difficult, therefore, to say whether she realised Francis's relative indifference to her when she was young, or whether this painful realisation did not come to her until much later when he paid attentions to other women.

When Francis arrived in Lorraine the little Court at Lunéville must have seemed extremely dull after Vienna. His late father, who had been so gentle that he was

called " the father of the people *and* of the aristocracy," had hated saying no to any one, and as a result the small court was overburdened with ancient courtiers and heavy debts. Francis surprised his former tutors by showing unexpected firmness, especially when it came to reorganising the finances of his Duchy. Like many men of mediocre talents, he was an able business man, he enjoyed adding up accounts and saving money. This was the first time that Francis displayed the talents which later caused Frederick the Great ironically to remark that " he was the mere banker of Maria Theresa's Court." He was economical—he was after all a Frenchman—and for so young a man, he was a very able financial administrator of his little country.

In 1730 he went to Versailles to pay his respects to Louis XV., his liege lord and second cousin. This was only the first stage in the grand tour of Europe he had arranged for himself. While he was away from home his mother, Duchess Elisabeth Charlotte, a daughter of Philip of Orleans, acted as his regent in Lunéville.

By implication, if not openly, Emperor Charles now acknowledged Francis as the future husband of his daughter. Maria Theresa must undoubtedly have been nagging her father daily. For General Neipperg, who met Francis in Luxembourg, accompanied him wherever he went. Besides, in London and The Hague, Francis stayed with the Austrian Ambassadors and he was presented by them to the sovereigns of these two countries.

Francis was in England from October to December 1731. Charles was particularly anxious about this visit, for, chiefly due to the efforts of Philip Stanhope, who was then the British Ambassador in The Hague, the support of Holland and England had been won for

the Pragmatic Sanction. Charles had paid heavily for England's support of his *idée fixe*, for in return he had been forced to dissolve the Austrian Ostend East India Company, a rival of British companies trading with the East. Charles had also given England his word that his daughter would not marry a Bourbon or any other prince influential enough to upset the balance of power in Europe, and he had agreed to support the rule of a Spanish family in Italy.

Naturally George II. had every reason to be pleased with this bargain; he had acknowledged a purely theoretical Sanction and had received very practical gains in return. He and Queen Caroline treated Francis with the courtesy due the future consort of the ruling Habsburg. Francis hunted with the King in Richmond and Windsor, he conversed with Queen Caroline in the evening, he went to Woolwich Arsenal, and he saw both Houses of Parliament.

When Francis left, George wrote to assure his young visitor that "nothing could have given me greater pleasure than your sojourn in this country. I prize the opportunity of becoming acquainted with your worth, and I am certain that your kind heart will bear witness to the sincerity with which I assure you of my perfect esteem and constant friendship." Austria's relations with the Maritime Powers had been strengthened by Francis's visit. Emperor Charles was pleased.

In The Hague, Francis saw a great deal of Lord Chesterfield, and, sponsored by him, the Duke became a member of a Masonic Lodge. Some Roman Catholic historians have expressed their horror at the fact that this Catholic Prince had anything to do with Freemasonry. Obviously Francis was by temperament a "joiner," a man who would have become a member of

many clubs in whatever generation he happened to be born, but even from the Catholic point of view it is unfair to reproach him for becoming a Mason. He was far too shrewd and ambitious at this period in his life to have done anything which might have offended the bride of whom he was not yet quite certain, or the Emperor, whose son-in-law he hoped to become. It should be remembered in this connection that Francis did not break any of the rules of the Catholic Church, for the first Papal decree against Freemasonry was not issued until 1738 by Clement XII., seven years after Francis joined the Lodge in The Hague.

Before returning to Vienna, Francis was instructed by Charles to pay a visit to Berlin. The increasingly independent attitude of Prussia towards the Holy Roman Emperor and thus towards the Habsburgs had become intolerable to Charles. Frederick William, the son of Frederick I., the first King, who had served Emperor Leopold I. so dutifully that a kingship had been the reward, took little notice of the Emperor. In 1721 friction with Vienna had caused him to recall his Minister. He seemed to have forgotten that his grandfather Frederick William had been a mere Elector, though the Great one. It was symptomatic of the changing relationship of the Emperor and the King of Prussia that Charles thought it worth while to send Francis to Brandenburg as a semi-official envoy of goodwill.

Some years before it had suited Frederick William's convenience stubbornly to resist Holland's and England's obvious desire to gain his support in an open alliance against the Emperor. In 1726, Charles had promised that, as a reward, Prussia was to have the domains of Berg and Ravenstein after the last of the

House of Palatine-Neuberg had died, and, in return, the King of Prussia had formerly recognised the Pragmatic Sanction in the Treaty of Wusterhausen. Later, when Charles was unable to keep his promise, Frederick William had accepted the inevitable, but he disliked Charles more heartily than ever.

Francis's stay in Berlin would have tested the *savoir faire* of a much older diplomat, for Frederick William was ill and extremely irritable. Even his "giant guards" no longer comforted him. Two years before, his son Frederick had tried to escape from his father's harsh régime by fleeing to England. He had been caught and imprisoned for months in the fortress of Küstrin, and Katte, the friend who had joined him on his flight, had been executed before his eyes. Now, though Frederick continued to hate his father, he was outwardly resigned, and Frederick William, exhausted by his own anger with his son, was a difficult host.

Francis had been instructed to be particularly friendly towards Crown Prince Frederick, as the King's ill-health made it seem possible that Frederick would soon succeed him. The two young men had nothing in common, and even exuberant Francis found it difficult to be friendly with the morose Crown Prince. Frederick was in one of his coldest and most unapproachable moods. He was soon to be married to a particularly unattractive young woman, when the most charming girl in the world would not have attracted him. He, too, was weary of the lifelong conflict with his father, and he was bowing to the inevitable, though he knew "that no good would come of this marriage." But his resignation had made him bitter beyond his years, he remained "the target for the King's bitter attacks and the scapegoat for his temper."

Francis's constant good nature, his unsubtle humour, his persistent charm might easily have irritated Frederick, but the young Duke of Lorraine's tact and diplomacy did not fail him in this difficult situation. He was absolutely sure in his approach to this hypersensitive Prussian Crown Prince, and he charmed Frederick completely.

"The Duke of Lorraine left yesterday," Frederick wrote on March 15, 1732, to his sister Wilhelmine, to whom he truthfully reported events at their father's Court. "He is the most delightful Prince I have met. He is very clever, and his manner is splendid and free. We are very good friends, and when we are together people must think we are mad, for we laugh and jest all the time. The Duke shows so much spirit that one is never weary. He tells stories charmingly and wittily. He is extremely vivacious, but he is able to restrain his liveliness when necessary, so that staid individuals like him as much as do mad people like myself."

Francis witnessed the formal engagement of Elisabeth-Christina to Frederick, and perhaps the sight of this ungainly creature roused in him sincere sympathy for the young Prussian. For Francis, unlike Frederick, cared a great deal about attractive women.

Early in the spring Francis left Berlin. He was pleased with himself and eager to return to Vienna after this absence of three and a half years. He was certain in his own mind that he would finally be officially recognised as Maria Theresa's fiancé, for she was now fifteen and old enough to become engaged. A letter from the Emperor which had reached Francis in Berlin had encouraged his hopes. Charles had written "that he desired nothing more ardently than to be able to embrace his dearest son again."

When Francis reached Breslau on his journey to Vienna an imperial messenger was awaiting him. Francis restrained his joy, for he was sure that the courier would have good news for him. Again, however, he was to be disappointed, for he was informed that he had been appointed governor of Hungary and that this meant living in Pressburg and not in Vienna. Francis was puzzled and worried by this appointment. It might mean that Charles was less favourably inclined to the marriage or, on the other hand, he might merely have decided that as the future consort Francis should learn at first hand about the government of his wife's domains.

In Vienna Francis was affectionately received by the Emperor. He was welcomed like a son, but Charles said nothing whatsoever about his future as a son-in-law. He was ordered to leave for Pressburg almost at once. William Coxe, in his famous *History of the House of Habsburg*, published in 1807, claims that "Charles had protracted the declaration of the match to lure the Queen of Spain with the hopes of a union between their two families."

In view of the fact that Charles had assured George II. of England that he would not further complicate the European balance of power by such a marriage, this was probably not the reason for his indecision. He was, however, seriously worried at the time about a possible war with France about Poland. At the battle of Poltava in 1709, Stanislaus Leczinski, the King of Poland, had been defeated by Frederick Augustus I., Elector of Saxony, who thereafter was known as Augustus II. of Poland. Though Augustus is known to history as "the Strong," he was now over sixty, and his dissolute life caused people to expect that he

would not live to be very much older. Poland had not yet ratified the Pragmatic Sanction, and Charles VI. promised to defend the claims of Augustus the Strong's son, who later became the third Augustus of Poland, if, in return, Poland acknowledged the Sanction.

The ratification of the Sanction by the Elector of Saxony was particularly important to Charles, as Augustus III. was married to Maria-Josephe, his brother Joseph's daughter, who, according to Leopold's Law, took precedence over Maria Theresa as the successor to the throne of the Habsburgs. Russia, too, agreed to support the Saxon claimant to the throne of Poland. To ensure herself of Charles's help when this ominous situation came to a head, Anne of Russia promised to acknowledge the Pragmatic Sanction, if he put his army at her disposal.

Obviously France would fight on the side of Stanislaus, for Louis XV. was married to his daughter. Apart and above these family sentiments was the outstanding political consideration that, as Pierre Gaxotte so rightly says: "France has always needed an ally who could attack Germany from the rear."

The War of the Polish Succession, which for Charles was an armed defence of the Pragmatic Sanction, began in 1733 shortly after the death of Augustus the Strong. He had died in February 1733, a few months after Francis had returned to Austria. The war lasted until the autumn of 1735, and the peace was signed in Vienna on the third of October. Charles's ally, Augustus III., became King of Poland, but Charles was bitterly disappointed by the Peace. He was forced to surrender Naples and Sicily to Don Carlos of Spain, receiving Parma and Piacenza in return. Russia, Poland, and Saxony had been added to the powers acknowledging

the Pragmatic Sanction, but France demanded an exorbitant price for recognising it.

Fleury, who accepted Francis's and Maria Theresa's future marriage as a *fait accompli*, had conceived a brilliant solution. Stanislaus was to be given Lorraine to compensate him for the loss of the Polish Throne. At his death the Duchies of Bar and Lorraine were to go to the French Crown. Francis was to be given the Duchy of Tuscany—after the death of the last reigning Medici, who was still alive and did not actually die until two years later. Only on these conditions, which would deprive Francis of the Duchy ruled by his family for seven hundred years, did France promise to recognise the Pragmatic Sanction.

This unpleasant situation finally forced Charles formally to recognise Francis as his future son-in-law. Tremendous pressure was put on Francis by Charles to accept this proposal and to relinquish his Duchy. Charles, who hated friction and avoided unpleasantness whenever he could, did not discuss matters with Francis himself. Instead, Bartenstein, who, so we are told, richly possessed the arts of "cavil and chicanery," and whose influence on the Emperor increased with the years, was sent to persuade Francis to give up Lorraine.

For months Francis was in a state of conflict between his loyalty to his people and his ambition. His mother was naturally beside herself. She sent him frantic letters begging him not to abandon the Duchy. "It would be cutting our throats," she wrote, "and that of our House if you accepted such a bargain."

A few weeks after the signing of the Treaty of Vienna, Francis's decision was obviously made, and he was trying to rationalise his decision, so that it would seem less crude to the world. "You know our un-

fortunate situation," he wrote on November 23, 1735, to an old friend in Lunéville, " we are too weak to resist further, and this depresses us all. But nothing can be done to defend oneself against superior force. I don't see what else I can do for the glory of my House and my faithful subjects, whom, because of this unfortunate situation, I am obliged to lose. Nothing will ever make me give up the sincere friendship I feel for them, and always I shall try to give them expressions of my sincere affection."

On April 13, Bartenstein presented Francis with the document on which he was to sign away his Duchy. The document stated that he was to inherit Tuscany after the death of the ruling Medici, and that as a compensation for the loss of Lorraine, France would pay him an annual income of 450,000 livres. Three times Francis threw down the pen in unhappy disgust, but Bartenstein finally spoke to him roughly : " If you don't renounce your Duchy, you will have no Archduchess " (" Point de renonciation, point d'Archeduchesse "). Francis signed the document.

On May 4, Charles was suddenly prompted to make a comforting gesture towards Francis. By a secret Treaty between them, Francis was appointed Governor-General of the Austrian Netherlands. Francis never took over this office, but Charles's conscience was relieved, and he also assured Francis in a letter that he would never have troubled him so much about a " single word " (Francis's signature) if it had not been for the young man's own good.

By January, Charles had felt sure of Francis, and the young man was finally rewarded by a formal engagement to Maria Theresa. On January 31, 1736, wearing " a magnificent suit of chestnut brown velvet, orna-

mented in silver, the hems sewed with gold, the buttons made of diamonds," he presented himself first to Charles and then to the Empress, and officially asked for the hand of their eldest daughter, Maria Theresa.

They were a very handsome couple. Maria Theresa was still a slender girl, and she carried herself beautifully. "Her walk is graceful and majestic," Count Podewils, Frederick the Great's Ambassador, later described her to the King of Prussia, "her figure is round and full, her hair is blonde with a reddish tint, her deeply blue eyes are very large and full of life and sweetness. Her nose is very straight. Her white teeth show up charmingly when she laughs. Though her mouth is large, it is pretty. Her neck and her chest are beautifully shaped, and her hands are delicious . . . though she does not take very great care of her skin, her complexion is fresh and clear. Her manners are vivacious and pleasing; she is always gracious. Maria Theresa is a charming and most attractive woman."

Immediately after their engagement Maria Theresa and Francis signed a formal declaration that they would make no claims to the throne if Charles was still to have a son. As Elisabeth-Christina had not borne any children for ten years, and as she had grown tremendously stout and old, this clause seems harsh, for it could only have referred to a second marriage of Charles, made possible by her death. But Charles's concentration on the Pragmatic Sanction had now become an intense, almost mad, preoccupation, which overshadowed all other considerations and sentiments. When Maria Theresa signed this Renunciation Document, as it is called, after her formal engagement to Francis, she, too, was actually ratifying the Pragmatic Sanction, just as the great foreign powers had done.

Francis spent the weeks before this formal betrothal and their marriage on February 12 in Pressburg. During this time a few stereotyped love letters reached Maria Theresa from her fiancé. Her letters, the earliest letters from her which have been preserved, are pathetically eager by comparison.

" Most Serene Archduchess, my angel bride," Francis wrote, " having received from His Majesty the Emperor gracious permission to write to you, I can no longer resist profiting from his gracious act. Dearest, it will not be difficult for you to believe that nothing could be harder for me than to approach you by letter instead of throwing myself at your feet. Let my dearest bride be fully assured that in all the world there is no bridegroom more entirely devoted and respectful than my angel bride's most faithful servant, Francis."

Maria Theresa answered :

" Your dear letter made me very happy. I am convinced that you would rather have assured me of your affection in person than by letter. You will know that I feel the same about you. It is good that this separation will not be long, and I hope that we shall be together more constantly in the future. I assure you that all my life I shall remain your most faithful bride, Maria Theresa."

To this point this letter is written in German. Then she continues in French, the language she knows he prefers :

" I am infinitely grateful for the attention you show me in sending me news of yourself, for I was already as anxious as a small miserable dog. Love me a little and excuse me for not writing more, but it is ten o'clock and the courier is waiting for my letter. Farewell, *Mausl*, I embrace you with all my heart, be careful of

yourself. Farewell, *caro viso*. I am your *sponsa delectissima*."

They were married by the Papal Nuncio Domenica Passione on the evening of February 12 in the chapel of the Augustinæ Convent next to the *Hofburg*. Francis had not arrived from Pressburg until that afternoon. Like his bride, he was dressed entirely in white at the ceremony. Robinson reported that many of Francis's former courtiers from Lorraine came to Austria to attend the wedding. "They have given," he reported to London, "a remarkable, though it may be the last, instance of their duty and affection for the House of Lorraine."

Charles's fanatic devotion to court etiquette caused a slight delay in the marriage service. As the Nuncio represented the Pope he wanted to remain seated while he married the young couple. They were to stand respectfully before him. Charles, who refused to hear of such a procedure, quickly promulgated a *Bull*, according to which the Nuncio was to remain on his feet before the heiress of the Habsburg dynasty.

At Maria Theresa's suggestion, a medal was struck to commemorate the marriage: "Votorum tandem compotes" (Having at last the fruition of our desires). Francis had become the consort of one of the most powerful heiresses in Europe; she had at last been allowed to marry the only man she ever loved. Her obvious adoration of him, her feminine submission to him, comforted him for the sacrifice of his inheritance. He was sure that his ambitions for power would be satisfied, that she would be obedient to him, that he would be the real ruler of the Habsburg Empire. This lack of understanding of his young wife's character, of her forceful personality, was to be Francis's tragedy.

CHAPTER FOUR

EXISTENCE became extremely complicated and difficult for Maria Theresa after her marriage; never again was she to know real peace of mind; she was always to be harassed by personal or political anxieties. A short honeymoon in Styria, a visit to the famous Madonna at Mariazell Chapel to get a very special blessing on her union, was the only light-hearted experience in her life after she married Francis. Apart from the family and political anxieties she had to face, she was pregnant a few months after her marriage, and she felt very ill. Altogether, she gave birth to sixteen children. Sentimental male historians often speak of her "blessed motherhood," but her confinements and the miserable months she spent before them were a constant strain on her. Though she never neglected her official duties during her many pregnancies, she never overcame her fear of childbirth, whatever her biographers may say, and before her sister Marianne's first child was born—a confinement which cost Marianne her life—Maria Theresa wrote to her that: "Since the first of the month, I have not been at peace for a single moment; I think continuously of your coming confinement. I know what it means, and I therefore look forward to it with terror."

During the summer after the young couple's return to Vienna, Maria Theresa could not indulge herself because she felt ill; she had no time to be particularly careful of herself. All sorts of complicated situations had to be straightened out. Francis, who in his youth

was always irrationally and annoyingly optimistic, had been vaguely hoping that he would not be asked to give up Lorraine at once, and it was a shock to him to realise that Stanislaus Leczinski was to take over his Duchy immediately. Maria Theresa had to comfort her husband for this loss, and, besides, his mother had to be pacified. Naturally, it was Maria Theresa who had to perform this delicate task. She apparently succeeded with her usual tact, for in a letter from Elisabeth Charlotte to her son, the Dowager Duchess of Lorraine tells him that "his wife had written her the most friendly letter in the world, full of kindness for him and for herself." "I pray God," the Dowager Duchess closed this letter, "to bless you both and the child who will be born to you. May it be a fine Prince, who will terminate some of our troubles."

The Duchess's good wishes reflected the attitude of the entire Court at Vienna. It was subtly impressed on Maria Theresa that if her child was not a son, the end of the world would be near. Charles's tremendous political sacrifices for the Pragmatic Sanction made him feel very definitely that Heaven owed him a grandson, and his daughter knew that her father would be desperate if she disappointed him by giving birth to a mere daughter.

In April the entire Court experienced a great shock when Prince Eugene died very suddenly. He had become such an integral part of the Habsburg dynasty, he had served three Emperors wisely and loyally, and people could hardly imagine that a council meeting could be successfully held without him. He was seventy-two, and suffering "from phlegm," but he had become such an institution that no one contemplated his death seriously. "When Prince Eugene's servants went into

his chamber this morning, they found him extinguished in his bed like a taper," Robinson reported to Lord Harrington.

Maria Theresa was particularly affected by the distinguished old soldier's death. She may have appreciated what his loss would mean to the Habsburgs and to herself in the future. Though he had never exerted as great an influence on Charles as he had on Joseph I. and Leopold I., he had been a restraining presence, for without Prince Eugene's advice, Charles might have adopted even madder measures to secure the Pragmatic Sanction. Prince Eugene had not, however, succeeded in persuading Charles that this document might not be effective in the future. " Two hundred thousand men under arms are worth more than all the sanctions in the world," he had told Charles repeatedly. During the Silesian War and the Seven Years War, Maria Theresa was bitterly to regret the fact that her father had not taken Prince Eugene's advice.

Almost immediately after Eugene's death, Charles involved himself in a disastrous and wholly unnecessary war with the Turks. Now that Prince Eugene's restraining influence was gone, Charles flung himself into adventure like a schoolboy whose headmaster has been suddenly removed. Perhaps he wanted to prove to himself and to others that he could defeat the Turks without the help of Prince Eugene; perhaps Austria's earlier victories over the Turks based on Eugene's strategy lived on in Charles's mind so vividly that he could not conceive of an Austrian defeat.

In 1736, Anne of Russia, hoping to re-establish Russia's position in the Crimea, had invaded Turkey. Anne had taken the trouble formally to declare war on the Sultan, Mahmud I., but actually, of course, hers

was a pure war of conquest. As Austria was her ally, she had demanded the Emperor's assistance. She intimated that, unless he agreed, she would withdraw her support of the Pragmatic Sanction. The very suggestion that Russia might cease to uphold the Sanction put Charles in a panic. The Turks had asked him to act as mediator between them and Russia. He at first agreed, but he was now so afraid of Anne that he decided to join her in her attack on Turkey.

Austria was entirely unprepared for war. The treasury was depleted; the small army was in a shockingly disorganised condition. According to the official records, the Austrian army at the time consisted of 122,514 men. Actually, however, the infantry had only 26,000 and the cavalry 15,000 men. Eugene's death, furthermore, had left Charles without any really able generals. Seckendorf, who was finally appointed as Field-Marshal, was a Lutheran, and Charles, who claimed that he was attacking the Turks "because it was his duty as a Christian," was reproached by many of his Catholic courtiers for selecting a Protestant, an "unbeliever," for this important post.

When Seckendorf learned about the condition of the army, he wished that he had not been chosen, and his report to Charles is important, as it indicates Maria Theresa's military heritage: "I cannot consistently with my duty to God and to the Emperor," Seckendorf wrote, "conceal the miserable condition of the barracks and the hospital. The troops, crowded together without sufficient bedding to cover them, are a prey to innumerable diseases; they are exposed to rain and other inclemencies of the weather from the dilapidated state of the barracks, which are in constant danger of being overthrown by the wind. Besides, there is a

total want of artillery, ammunition, and other requisites."

Seckendorf's campaign ended in disaster. He was driven back from Nissa which he had been ordered to attack, and he returned to Vienna in disgrace. Ardent Catholics attributed his defeat to his Protestant tenets. The Empress's Lutheran past was brought up once more, and violent quarrels broke out at the Court. Seckendorf was tried by a court martial, found guilty, and confined to a fortress.

In February 1737, in the midst of these anxieties about the war, Maria Theresa's first child was born. It was a girl, Maria Elisabeth. For months after the birth of their daughter she and Francis felt the unspoken atmosphere of reproach which surrounded them. In July, the last of the Medici died in Tuscany. The King of Sicily put forward a claim to the Duchy, but with the help of France he was quietened, and Francis could have gone to Tuscany to take over his new Duchy. Maria Theresa longed to leave the depressing atmosphere in Vienna, but she was not yet strong enough to persuade Francis to do so. He insisted on remaining, and though she was the loser in this their first conflict, she was gathering strength.

He had refused to go, because for months he had harboured a secret desire to take a prominent part in the war against the Turks. He therefore called himself "Royal Highness," wrote many official documents to Tuscany proclaiming himself as the new ruler, but stayed in Vienna.

Maria Theresa made the best of the situation and encouraged this ambition. She was determined to make a great general out of her husband. For, utterly devoted as she was to him, she preferred to see him

interested in military affairs than in politics. It is difficult to say how consciously she already envisaged the future, but already she was not particularly eager for him to become too much interested in the government of her country. Perhaps, too, she was beginning to realise that he had few statesmanlike qualities. He was an excellent diplomat when it came to dealing with other individuals, but he lacked insight into complicated political situations. She was therefore determined that he should be a general.

Late in 1737 Francis volunteered for service in the army. Though his military experience was confined to the very limited theoretical knowledge of strategy taught him by General Neipperg, his devoted father-in-law foolishly placed him in command of the army. True, he was to co-operate closely with General Königsegg, but in practice, when Francis first joined the troops, his prestige, based merely on the fact that he was married to the Habsburg heir, was greater than the general's.

This second campaign was even more disastrous than the first under Seckendorf had been. The Turks invaded and gained control of nearly all of Serbia. Again Charles blamed this failure on his generals, instead of on the fact that his army was quite unequal to the task. This time Königsegg was recalled in disgrace, and Francis was harshly reproved by the Emperor.

A third campaign under Marshal Wallis finally brought about the complete defeat of the Austrian forces. At the Peace of Belgrade in 1739, the Turks retained all of Serbia, including Belgrade, and the important fortress of Orsova. Charles, who could not bear to admit that he himself was entirely responsible for this war, blamed the Peace on General Neipperg, who had negotiated with the Turks. Never had Charles

been in so antagonistic a mood towards the world in general. The achievements of Eugene for Austria were undone. Charles's losses were greater than any gains he had made for the Habsburgs earlier in his reign, and their prestige had suffered an enormous defeat. This Turkish war made it quite obvious to Europe as a whole how weak the once mighty Habsburgs had become. Charles had sacrificed far too much for the Pragmatic Sanction.

Francis did not take part in this last campaign. He had been so unpopular when he returned to Vienna in 1738 that some influential people in Vienna ventured openly to express the wish that Maria Theresa, and her inefficient husband, should renounce her right to the succession. Her sister Marianne was to take her place. The Emperor would not hear of such a suggestion, but he was furious with Francis. The two men who had once been on such friendly terms began to hate each other. Maria Theresa tried to reconcile them, and as she was again pregnant this excitement was very bad for her.

Francis's unpopularity was increased when, on October 26, 1738, Maria Theresa gave birth to another daughter, Marianne. Charles was beside himself, it seemed to him that he was doomed to a family of women. In his impotent rage he blamed Maria Theresa for this second disappointment.

Maria Theresa was exhausted from her confinement and the incessant friction of the Court. She therefore decided that they must go to Tuscany. Her father approved of this plan, and this journey really amounted to a period of exile from Austria. They left Vienna in December 1738, the worst time of the year to cross the Alps, leaving their elder daughter at home in the care of

nurses. As Maria Theresa insisted on nursing her infants herself, the small three-months-old baby was taken with them. The discomforts of this journey can be imagined. They did not arrive in Florence until January 20, 1739. They were not welcomed with overwhelming enthusiasm by the population of Tuscany. Francis was, in fact, treated rather coldly as an absentee ruler, and he and Maria Theresa remained only for three months.

When Maria Theresa and Francis returned to Vienna in the late summer of 1739, the city was already feeling the effects of the unfortunate war against the Turks. The disastrous Peace added to this general gloom. Maria Theresa, who was again pregnant, was conscious of her husband's unpopularity wherever she went. She was only twenty-three, but at times life seemed hopeless to her. Her father was ill and irritable, and the glory of the Habsburgs seemed indeed almost a thing of the past.

The year 1740, the most decisive year of Maria Theresa's life, was also one of the most miserable. In January of that year she gave birth to another child, and again the infant was a daughter, whom they called Maria Caroline. In June, her eldest daughter died, and Maria Theresa was beside herself with grief; she felt somehow that this was a divine retribution to punish her for having been dissatisfied with this child because she was a girl.

Apart from her personal distress, a new political complication had arisen early in 1740. In return for Prussia's support of the Pragmatic Sanction, Charles had once promised Frederick William the domains of the House of Palatinate-Neuberg after the death of the reigning Duke. Since then Charles had changed his

mind, and he had decided to support the claims of the Duke's natural successors. France, too, was in favour of Charles Philip's heirs, and Frederick William was informed that he would, after all, have no right to take possession of these territories after the Duke's death.

Frederick William refused to accept this sudden change of plans; if the situation made it absolutely imperative he was willing to make practical use of his cherished soldiers. If Charles had been able to win England and Holland as allies, he would once more have called together his pitiful little army and have declared war. France, however, wanting to avoid a general European conflagration, negotiated secretly with Frederick William, hoping to appease him. Before the matter was settled, and fortunately for Charles, Frederick William died in 1740, and for the moment the Austro-Prussian quarrel did not come to an open breach. As Frederick was known as a literary, flute-playing youth, who had no interest in military affairs, Charles was not worried about the future.

In the summer of 1740 Charles was frequently urged by his advisers to allow Francis to be elected as King of the Romans. The "King of the Romans" was the appointed successor of the Holy Roman Emperor. But fantastic as this may seem, Charles, who was then fifty-six, had not yet abandoned his hope for a son who would inherit his imperial honours. His wife was suffering from acute attacks of dropsy, and her condition was considered serious, which now gave Charles reason to believe that he might, one day, marry again and have sons of his own. He refused even to consider the candidature of Francis as King of the Romans. "Could the Emperor have prevailed on himself," a contemporary wrote after Charles's death, "to have completed his

endeavours by procuring his son-in-law, the Great Duke, to be elected King of the Romans, in his own lifetime, perhaps the difficulties they now labour under would never have had a being."

When Charles considered the future, he tended to forget that his own health was none too good. His own condition was considered serious by his physicians; his gout was very bad. It was painful for him to go hunting, but he refused to give it up. In October 1740 he went as usual to his hunting lodge. On October 11 he was taken violently ill with mushroom poisoning. His wife was constantly by his bedside, but Maria Theresa, who was expecting another child within six months, was not allowed to see him often. The nervous strain she had suffered since her return from Tuscany had made itself felt. She spent most of the time in bed.

Charles died on October 20, 1740, and as Voltaire cynically remarked, "a pot of mushrooms changed the history of Europe." It is a tragic fact that this man, who had sacrificed the prestige of his country to the Pragmatic Sanction, whose dominating wish throughout his life had been for sons, and later for grandsons, should have died without knowing that the child his daughter was then bearing was a son, and that, though mixed with the Lorraine inheritance, the line of the Habsburgs was not extinct. Maria Theresa's first son, Joseph, was born on March 13, 1741.

CHAPTER FIVE

WHEN this crisis came, for her ascent to the throne was the most critical moment of her career, it proved to be fortunate for Maria Theresa that she knew so little about the affairs of State. Had she been less ignorant, and, above all, less innocent and trusting, she might have worn herself out in indecision. Had she seen clearly the apparently insurmountable difficulties before her, they might have overwhelmed her.

As it was, she was strengthened and guided by her unquestioning belief in her divine right as her father's successor. The Pragmatic Sanction was a sacred cause, and she was the leading crusader in its defence. She herself never doubted her position as the ruling Habsburg, and in time her own faith communicated itself to her surroundings. She was also encouraged by a tremendous belief in her Creator, she was convinced that God was on her side.

" God acknowledges my rights," she said, " He will protect me as He has done heretofore." And though her faith never wavered as she grew older, she was soon to realise that she could not sit back inactive, waiting for her God to defend her rights ; her experiences taught her that He needed her active help and the support of her armies.

Towards the end of his life Charles must have begun to be extremely uneasy about her lack of knowledge of the tremendous responsibilities before her. He may have realised that he had devoted too much energy to

the Pragmatic Sanction and not enough thought to the education of his pragmatic heir. At any rate in his will, opened immediately after his death, he stipulated that if his wife thought it advisable, she was temporarily to act as her daughter's co-regent. This clause in the late Emperor's will implied a very definite reproach to Francis, it was obvious that the Emperor had not forgiven him for his military inefficiency. Neither Empress Elisabeth-Christina nor Maria Theresa wanted to offend Francis. They were both tactful women, and the Emperor's last suggestion was therefore mentioned as little as possible. The Dowager Empress left the field to Francis and retired to a convent for a time, so that Maria Theresa could fully establish her independent position.

Elisabeth-Christina, who did not die until 1750, was later frequently shocked at the relative informality of her daughter's Court. For though from the beginning of her reign Maria Theresa demanded of her courtiers a rigid observance of etiquette, she herself was not bound by rules or regulations. She hated wasting her own precious time on unnecessary ceremonies.

After she ascended the throne, Maria Theresa made it quite clear to her Court that she wanted no indulgence from any one because she was young and inexperienced. She herself paid as little attention as possible to the fact that she was so often pregnant, or nursing a young infant, and she refused to allow her ministers to take any notice of her condition. Her health was excellent, and she maintained an iron self-discipline. When she was forced to remain in bed after childbirth, she received her ministers' and the ambassadors' reports in the bedroom which, good bourgeoise *Hausfrau* that she was, she shared with her husband.

She had chosen Count Emanuel Silva-Tarouca, a Portuguese, who had come to Vienna in his youth to join Prince Eugene's armies, as her personal preceptor. After her accession to the throne, he was officially appointed President of the Netherland Council, but this did not mean that she consulted him less frequently about the conduct of her private affairs. From him she accepted advice in the most personal matters. She assigned to him the "most delicate task," as he expressed it later, "of studying her character" and of "making suggestions to her which were very like reproofs."

She asked him to prepare for her a schedule of her daily programme, and she followed his suggestions. When he once told her that she was growing careless about her clothes, she tried to improve in this respect. "Her Majesty does not pay enough attention to her beauty," he had written, "and she does not take sufficient care of her clothes."

The programme of her daily activities, which he outlined for her, was very rigid. She arose at eight o'clock, devoting not more than an hour to dressing, breakfasting, and attending Mass. Silva admonished her not to drink her coffee cold, as this would be bad for her digestion. After breakfast she devoted herself for half an hour to her children; from half-past nine to half-past twelve she attended to affairs of State. She spent an hour at her dinner—from half-past twelve to half-past one—and Silva again reminded her to eat slowly and to partake of warm food. She was not to discuss serious subjects at table—*rien de serieux*—as this was as bad for the digestion as cold food. After dinner she was allowed a brief rest, then after a call on the Dowager Empress, she devoted herself to affairs

of State from four o'clock until half-past eight. From then until midnight she amused herself at cards or other games; she danced and allowed herself to be young. She loved dancing, she could be exuberantly gay, and, curiously enough, she had a passion for speed. When she drove from Schönbrunn, where she spent her summers, to the *Hofburg* in Vienna, she ordered her coachman to drive at a reckless pace, which often caused her friends great anxiety.

The country which Maria Theresa had inherited was in a shocking condition. "No one, I think," she wrote many years later, "will contradict me when I say that it would be difficult to find an example in history in which a crowned head came into power in more difficult and unfortunate circumstances." Charles had lost Sicily, Naples, Belgrade, and large sections of Serbia. The taxes from these territories were sadly missed in the exchequer, and, besides, Austria was still heavily in debt from the Turkish war.

A study of the budget gave Maria Theresa one of her first shocks. Though she was twenty-three, her mind was still very immature, and her father's personal extravagance made a startling impression on her. Besides, even later when she had a far-reaching grasp of vital issues, she never gave up her passion for details. Now, as a young woman, details loomed up before her, and she was horrified to learn that harmless hobbies could be so expensive. Charles had spent relatively large sums, for instance, on his parrots. Two huge barrels of Tokay wine had been used every year to soften the bread they ate; fifteen pails of the best Austrian wine was needed to bath them. She also learned, for instance, that 4000 Gulden had been expended annually merely for parsley used in the royal kitchens. And as a "sleeping

draft" Maria Theresa's grandmother had consumed twelve carafes of Hungarian wine every day of her mature life. It was fortunate for Maria Theresa that she was struck by these insignificant extravagances, which she was able to curtail. Action always satisfied her, she felt as though she were doing something, and this encouraged her to take up larger problems.

Actually, of course, these petty household expenditures meant nothing in the frightening deficit of the budget as a whole. The harvests had been bad and the country was menaced by a serious food shortage. Food riots broke out in Vienna and in the country districts. The revolt which occurred in the capital on November 22 was so ominous that the dragoons were called out. The leaders of this uprising were condemned to death, but Maria Theresa very wisely acquitted them. She did not pardon them altogether, however, for, despotic even in her youth, she was intolerant of all insubordination. The condemned men were ordered by her to sweep the streets of the city, dragging heavy chains, which were attached to their feet, after them. From the very first day of her reign she showed that she had more understanding for the word "justice"—cold, hard justice—in her motto, than for mercy or tolerance.

During the troubled weeks after her father's death, Francis was not as helpful and as comforting as she had hoped he would be. She had never confronted a critical situation before, problems which must be solved, and for the first time she was consciously aware that he lacked judgment. Like her father, he had more talent for detail work than insight into fundamental issues.

Francis's inability to help her was, however, a blessing for her in the end, for from the very first day of her rule

she learned to depend entirely on herself. She adored Francis, she was jealous of him, she showed every possible womanly reaction in her relationship with him, but when it came to the responsibilities of government, she soon treated him as a reigning monarch treats a beautiful and beloved wife.

Francis, in turn, must have been considerably startled by her sudden display of determination. She had always been so submissive to him in their private life, that he had not expected the self-reliance which was now revealed in her character. His illusion that, after Charles's death, he would, in fact, be the ruler of Austria, was rudely shattered. Her personal attachment to him never weakened, and this made her intention of being politically independent of him all the more apparent.

Despite his jovial manner, Francis, " this foreigner," was still disliked in Vienna, and her obvious personal devotion to him made her somewhat unpopular as well. Many Austrian aristocrats resented the fact that they were to be governed by a woman, and their silent opposition to her was increased because her husband was a Frenchman. Two days after Charles's death, the Marquis de Mirepoix, the French Ambassador in Austria, wrote to Monsieur Amelot that " the Princess is not liked. Part of the enmity and aversion felt for the Grand Duke falls upon her. The Elector of Bavaria, on the other hand, has the good wishes of every one, and I believe that if he were to come forward, the whole nation would be at his feet."

Maria Theresa was fully aware of this growing resentment towards her husband. She appreciated that this antagonism to him could become politically dangerous for herself. She had to support him in public, yet not let him dominate her politically. This situation was

complicated by the fact that she loved him. It was all very difficult, but throughout these trying weeks she showed her political and diplomatic skill.

She pretended not to know that Francis had many enemies, and towards him she remained unruffled and gentle, though she was often firm. A month after she became Queen she officially appointed Francis as her co-regent. She gave him no rights with this title, but she showed the courtiers that she alone would decide his outward prestige. "In view of Our sex," she had written in the document making him her co-regent, "We have decided that the assistance of a loyal person might make Our heavy burden of responsibilities easier."

From now on this "loyal person," her husband, always appeared with her on official occasions, and when, as Mirepoix wrote, her "Ministers made the strongest representations to her about her obvious determination to have the Grand Duke with her at public banquets, she silenced them by formally declaring that such was her will."

Actually, Maria Theresa's ministers need not have worried about Francis's influence, for, as Coxe points out: "although the Duke of Lorraine had been appointed co-regent, transacted the business of State with the ministers of the conference, and gave audiences to foreign ambassadors, yet he had little permanent influence in the direction of affairs, as well because the spirit of the government was supposed to reside in the conference as because the Queen was too imperious a temper to permit of any participation of real authority. He was, indeed, more distinguished for the comeliness of his person and the suavity of his manners than for strength of understanding or brilliancy of talents. He was fully sensible of his want of influence, and did not

scruple to acknowledge that his sentiments had no weight when contrary to those of the Queen."

One of the most striking things about her at this time was her ability to restrain her firmness when this seemed wise. She knew when to cease ordering her elderly ministers about, when to become again a gracious and apparently yielding young woman. Soon she was known, as a contemporary points out, " for her affability of manners, which had seldom been seen in her ancestors, and by which she gained the hearts of her subjects, without diminishing her dignity."

Instead of showing disfavour to the men at Court who were, or had been, obviously antagonistic to Francis, she was particularly charming to them. Though politically she was later a very vindictive woman, she never had a childish desire to revenge herself for their unkindness. She disarmed her husband's enemies by her consistent graciousness. She had suddenly become his protector.

There was no one to shield her. The day after her father's death, when she attended a private session of the Council of Ministers for the first time in her life, she had to be chivalrous towards the six aged men before her. The ministers were very old. The youngest was over sixty; Count Starhemberg, her Finance Minister, was seventy-seven; and Sinzendorff, her Chancellor, had been in the service of the Habsburgs since the time of her grandfather, Leopold I. Her ministers were sly and disagreeable old men. Some of them were dishonest. Sinzendorff was known to have accepted bribes. For supporting Francis's candidature as her husband, for instance, he had received huge sums from the old Duke of Lorraine.

Maria Theresa relieved her ministers at once by

announcing that she was not making any changes in her cabinet. Her dislike of Bartenstein was well known. She had bitterly resented his attitude towards Francis when he had forced him to sign the document giving up Lorraine. Even Bartenstein, however, was not dismissed. On the contrary, until the end of the War of the Austrian Succession in 1748, he was one of her most trusted advisers. She knew that his experience would be useful to her. Already her head was ruling her personal likes and dislikes. She was far-sighted, for she could not afford to have it said in her own territories or abroad that drastic reorganisations were occurring in Vienna. There were too many people in Europe waiting to hear that the government in Austria had collapsed, that the Pragmatic Sanction had proved to be a farce.

If her old advisers could not give her any advice or help, she had no intention of letting them harm her cause, either directly or indirectly. She frightened her lazy ministers by her own tremendous capacity for work. They had begun by treating her as a " woman in delicate condition," but she soon taught them to fear her perseverance. She was frankly dissatisfied with their long discussions of the problems of government. She preferred to read original documents herself. " She hardly had time to sleep or eat."

Though she continued throughout her life to devote much of her energy to smaller problems, she now fully realised that there was only one outstanding task before her. She knew that she must above all be unanimously acclaimed and accepted by her own subjects, and that other European Powers must be made to ratify the Pragmatic Sanction in deed as they had done on paper.

Historians, writing about her after she became a great Queen, often tend to make light of her domestic

Austrian difficulties at the beginning of her reign. Actually, a growing faction of powerful individuals in her own provinces and countries were not at all eager to recognise her as their sovereign. The aristocracy's opposition to her was infecting the people, and many of her subjects were now disturbed by the thought that a woman should rule over them. There never had been a female monarch in the Habsburg family, and the idea of a reigning Queen appealed as little to the people as it did to the Court. It offended all the traditions of the Austrians to see a woman on the ancient throne of the Habsburgs.

For centuries, for example, it had been the custom for the new Habsburg monarch to be on his horse when he received the homage of the Estates from Lower Austria. Maria Theresa, who was six months pregnant when the representatives from Lower Austria arrived in Vienna, welcomed them seated in dignity in a hall in the *Hofburg*. The representatives were disappointed by this necessary change in custom, a strong tradition of the past had been broken, and, as the Venetian Ambassador in Austria reported: "The murmur of tumultuous voices says that the Kingdom should not be ruled by a woman, and that public interest requires that a German Prince should be chosen."

From one point of view the objections to Maria Theresa because she was a woman can be well understood. Since 1438 the head of the Habsburg family had always, as has been said, been elected as the Holy Roman Emperor (of the German Nation). Naturally it was quite unthinkable that a woman should hold this high office. And as Austria was now governed by a woman, the imperial titles and honours would of course pass out of the family.

Maria Theresa was fully aware of this situation, and though her own position among the German electoral states was by no means secure, she immediately began electioneering for her husband. She was determined that if she could not be chosen, he should become the Holy Roman Emperor. She emphatically pushed aside any suggestion that she was less eligible as a Queen because she could not, like her ancestors, be an Emperor as well. She resented even veiled attacks on her because she was a woman. She was by no means, however, a believer in the rights of women, an eighteenth-century forerunner of modern feminism. She did not believe that women as a whole had any rights to vindicate. She defended her own, because she considered herself an exception; her rights, so she was convinced, were divine, a God-given heritage from her Habsburg ancestors.

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As a whole, the German Princes opposed Maria Theresa. They questioned the validity of the Pragmatic Sanction. Some of them, the Elector Palatine, for instance, adopted indirect methods of attack. In his communications to her, he continued to address her as an " Archduchess " instead of as a Queen, though he never said bluntly that he did not acknowledge her right to the succession in Austria. Charles Albert of Bavaria, on the other hand, who was resolved to invalidate her rights, never concealed his intentions. He claimed to be Charles VI.'s rightful successor, for he had married Joseph I.'s elder daughter.

Under Leopold's Law she should have succeeded Charles VI., but Charles Albert did not base his claims solely on this heritage. Instead, he went back to Ferdinand I. who lived early in the sixteenth century.

Ferdinand's daughter, too, had married a Bavarian Duke, and Ferdinand had stipulated that should he die without an *héréditaire légitime*, the domains of the Habsburgs were to be inherited by the Bavarians.

Charles Albert interpreted the words "legitimate issue" to mean male issue. In response to this open challenge Maria Theresa instructed Sinzendorff to go through the old archives until he found Ferdinand's will. On the third of November 1740, Sinzendorff was then instructed to invite the ministers from Saxony, Prussia, Hanover, England, and Russia to come and see for themselves that Ferdinand never used the word *male* in this connection, and that Charles Albert's claims were unfounded.

Whether or not Charles Albert would eventually succeed in taking Maria Theresa's place on the throne of the Habsburgs depended largely upon the alliances he could conclude with other European countries. So far none of the Great Powers had expressed any intention of repudiating their promised support of the Pragmatic Sanction. Anne of Russia had died a week after Charles VI., but young Tsar Ivan IV.'s Regents promised to uphold the Sanction. So did Venice and the Pope.

Maria Theresa was not entirely relieved by the support prompted by these countries. Even when she was young and inexperienced her faith in treaties was never as great as her father's. She was made particularly uneasy about Prussia's attitude towards her. She had heard that Frederick had changed very much since he became King. Before the death of Frederick William, she had heard of Frederick only to pity, or perhaps to despise, him as the weak son of a cruel father. Now he was reported to be full of energy

and intention. It might be awkward if he did not support her, for she knew that Frederick William had built up a huge army. She was also worried about France's future attitude towards the Pragmatic Sanction. Obviously Bavaria would need and would find some powerful ally, and the traditional enmity between France and Austria made it seem very possible that France would support Charles Albert.

Maria Theresa had learned more about French history since she had been married to a Frenchman, and she was beginning to realise that messages from French diplomats should not always be taken literally. The letters from Versailles were polite, she was always addressed as a ruling Majesty, but the Pragmatic Sanction was not mentioned in these documents.

Fleury was eighty-seven and too old to be interested in the violation of treaties, but the influence of Belle-Isle was growing, and it was no secret that he longed to increase the power of the Bourbons. It was obvious that France might decide to make the most out of the situation. An inexperienced woman was on the throne of Austria, the country had been weakened by Charles VI.'s wars, the army was depleted. A great opportunity was offered to France for finally crushing her hereditary enemy. As an English contemporary commented: "Even a mole-eyed politician might have discerned that the ruin of the House of Habsburg was the natural interest of that of Bourbon; and consequently that none but Dupes would have depended on the Courtesy of a known Enemy for their preservation."

It was known in Vienna that Fleury was particularly attentive to the Bavarian Ambassador in Paris, that the Cardinal had promised to support the Bavarian if he stood for Holy Roman Emperor at the next elections.

Maria Theresa was also informed that Fleury had intimated to the Bavarian Ambassador that French troops would be sent to his assistance if he decided to contest the Pragmatic Sanction by force.

Her anxiety about France gave Maria Theresa her first great disillusionment, her first outstanding lesson in political realism. No document could have been clearer than the agreement signed by her father and Louis XV. at the close of the war in 1735 concerning the Pragmatic Sanction, but, as she was to learn less than a year after his death, this treaty meant nothing, and France made war on Austria.

"It being demonstrated," the Pragmatic Sanction Treaty between France and Austria had said, and it was in the Vienna archives where she would re-read it at any time she chose, "that public tranquillity cannot long subsist, nor the balance of power in Europe be preserved in any other way than by the maintenance of this order of succession. His Most Christian Majesty, moved by the ardent desire of securing both public peace and the balance of power, and also in consideration of the conditions of peace to which His Imperial Majesty has consented principally for that reason, binds himself in the strongest manner to defend this order of succession, and in order that no future doubt may arise about the effect of this pledge and guarantee, His Most Christian Majesty consents to put into execution this same pledge, commonly called a guarantee, whenever it may be necessary, promising for himself, his heirs and successors, in the most faithful and absolute manner to defend with all his power, and to maintain and preserve against any persons whomsoever, so often as it shall be necessary, this order of succession which His Imperial Majesty has declared, in the form of a perpetual and individual trust,

in favour of the first-born, for all the heirs of His Imperial Majesty, whether male or female. Therefore His Most Christian Majesty promises and binds himself to defend him or her who, according to the agreement above quoted, may succeed to the Kingdoms, provinces, and states which His Imperial Majesty now possesses, and to maintain him or her in perpetuity against whomsoever may attempt, in any way, to disturb the possession of them."

As a matter of fact, though France continued politely to address Maria Theresa as "Her Majesty," though Fleury was assuring her of his country's "exact and inviolable fidelity," France was already preparing to declare war on her if this seemed expedient. For France, like most of Europe, was merely waiting to see what Frederick in Prussia would do with the efficient army he had inherited from his father. No European power wanted to commit herself until it was known which side he would support if Charles Albert of Bavaria declared war on Austria. France was particularly concerned, for even when, as Voltaire writes, "the French Minister to the Court of France first saw the Prussian troops being mobilised, he did not know whether they were destined against France or Austria." Frederick did not inform this minister, the Marquis de Beauveau, until he "mounted his horse" to leave for Silesia. Then he said to Beauveau: "I believe I am going to play your game for you: if aces turn up, we will divide."

Before the Silesian Campaign actually began, the Ambassadors in Berlin from many countries were assiduously applying the technique of secret diplomacy to find out Frederick's plans. Abroad, his representatives, in turn, were being discreetly questioned. Frederick had prepared for this curiosity. When asked

by Count Podewils, his own Minister for Foreign Affairs, what the Ambassadors were to say, Frederick prepared a ruthlessly frank memorandum.

"At each Court," he said, "these questions are to be answered in a different manner: in London it must be said that, as I have certain information that the Duke of Lorraine is going to make an agreement with France, I am making approaches to Vienna, so as to urge them to side with the sailors and religion (the Maritime and Protestant Powers). At The Hague we must say that nothing against the Peace of Europe is intended, that Frederick William made himself useful to the Emperor Leopold, and met with nothing but ingratitude; I, on the contrary, mean to recompense myself first, and to do service afterwards. At Hanover, at Mayence, we must talk about the necessity of heart-felt patriotism, and say that I want to support the Empire, and protect a House which is as yet weak."

Frederick was annoyed when Captain Guy Dickins, the Chargé d'Affaires at the British Embassy in Berlin, was dissatisfied with evasive answers, and tried more direct methods. Dickins asked the King frankly whether he intended "to maintain the Pragmatic Sanction."

Many young rulers would have been taken aback and made shy by this unaccustomed bluntness from an experienced diplomat, but Frederick was merely irritated. More than that, so Dickins reports, Frederick was angry. Dickins described his conversation with him to the Foreign Office:

"'I know,' the King of Prussia replied haughtily, 'that you have no instructions which authorise you to put such a question, but if you have received any, I have only one answer to make: England has no right

to ask what are my plans. I do not question her about her equipments; I content myself with hoping that you may not be beaten by the Spaniards.' "

Dickins was the one to be startled, but he conscientiously reported the King of Prussia's parting outburst to London: "I know very well," Frederick had closed the interview by saying, "that you, like France, want to keep all the Princes in the leading-strings, but I will not be led by either of you; and so far as you are concerned you are like the Athenians, who wasted their time talking, while Philip of Macedonia was preparing to attack them."

Maria Theresa heard disturbing rumours about Frederick's belligerent frame of mind, but as yet she did not take him as seriously as she was forced to do later. At a secret conference held before her father's funeral, however, she had already conscientiously urged her ministers to reorganise her own small army. Count Palffy, one of her most loyal Hungarian subjects, was appointed commander-in-chief. She reinstated Neipperg, Seckendorff, and Wallis who had been in disgrace and imprisoned since her father's last unsuccessful war. She had pleased Francis by making his brother Charles a Field-Marshal. An English critic, discussing Charles's abilities, compared him with his brother to Francis's disadvantage. "Prince Charles," this critic wrote in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, "is extremely commended for courage and conduct, and makes up a little for the flaws in the family."

Despite Maria Theresa's preparations for her defence, she never really expected that Frederick of Prussia would attack her. Her history tutors had taught her to think of little Prussia as a protégé of the Habsburgs. Besides, after Charles's death, Frederick had promptly

sent new credentials to von Borche, his Ambassador in Vienna, reappointing him as envoy to the "Queen of Hungary." He had thus very directly acknowledged her sovereignty and her right to succeed her father. Aggression, furthermore, did not fit in with the tales Maria Theresa had heard about Frederick of Prussia. She still judged him from the point of view of an innocent and inexperienced young woman. She had not learned that credulity is a most dangerous characteristic in a statesman. She had as yet acquired no discrimination. Her values were purely human and not political. And humanly it seemed impossible that Frederick would invade her country. She believed in gratitude, and she remembered that when he had been condemned to death by his father after his unsuccessful flight, her father had written to Frederick William begging him to spare the young man's life. Maria Theresa could not imagine that any one could forget such an act of kindness. Francis and Frederick, furthermore, had been on very friendly terms in Berlin; they occasionally exchanged amicable letters. As late as November 5, 1740, Frederick had written to Francis assuring him of his goodwill towards Maria Theresa. She, in turn, wrote to Frederick asking him to vote for Francis at the coming election of the Holy Roman Emperor. His vote, she assured him, "would pledge her and her consort to a lasting sense of indebtedness" to him.

Towards the end of November she was finally persuaded to send a special envoy to Berlin to find out more about Frederick's intentions. The Marchese Botta d'Adorno, who found the Prussian roads looking suspiciously like military highways, saw Frederick in December. He learned as little as the other Ambassadors had done.

Maria Theresa made an effort to forget the nagging worry about Prussia. Her antagonism towards Frederick was now mingled with disapproval, for she had been told that he was an atheist who scoffed at everything she held sacred in life, God and marriage and sentiment, at family feelings and respect towards one's elders, but she did not believe that he could possibly be wicked enough to take advantage of her own weak position. She firmly believed that good was the strongest power in the world, and as she was beginning to consider Frederick the incarnation of evil, she did not really believe that he could conquer her—or any one who was as essentially good as she was.

Maria Theresa was not without intuition when her own interests were involved, but she had little imagination for the conflicts of others. Men were either good or bad; she was intolerant of human frailties. She herself experienced few conflicts of conscience, for her religion told her exactly what was right. It would have been quite beyond her to understand that Frederick of Prussia was a mixture of good and bad, a tortured and unhappy human being.

She was as yet to learn how wicked this man, whom she later always called *le méchant homme*, could be. From almost the first day of his reign he was determined to attack Maria Theresa. Years later, after he had become more respectable in his successful kingship, when he sent his *Histoire de mon Temps* to Voltaire, he asked the Frenchman to delete one sentence in this manuscript. This was the sentence: "My troops always ready to act, my well-filled treasury, and the liveliness of my disposition—these were my reasons for making war on Maria Theresa."

His alleged cause for marching into Silesia in

December 1740 was so flimsy that no one could have accepted it seriously. One of the districts he coveted, the Duchy of Jägersdorf, had been purchased by Frederick's ancestors in 1523, but had reverted to the Habsburgs during the Thirty Years War under Emperor Ferdinand II. This dispossession of the House of Brandenburg had been formally and legally confirmed by the " Law of the Empire," the *Reichsrat.* The other Silesian Duchies—Brieg, Liegnitz, and Wohlau—had been acquired by the Hohenzollern as a feudal tenure in 1537, but in 1668 Frederick William, the Great Elector of Brandenburg-Prussia, had definitely resigned any claims to these possessions, and in return he had been given the township of Schwiebus, in northern Silesia. Prussia, in other words, had irrevocably surrendered these territories.

Frederick had no valid excuse whatsoever for invading Silesia, especially without declaring war on Maria Theresa before he sent his troops to Silesia. He was fully aware that he had no excuse. On the contrary, his manner showed that, in the hypocritical world in which he lived, he took pride in his frank spirit of aggression. He had coolly discussed the situation with his ministers and had laid before them two alternatives :

Austria might be persuaded to give up these Silesian districts voluntarily. Maria Theresa, like her father before her, was obviously chiefly concerned with the Pragmatic Sanction, and if she gave him what he wanted, Prussia, in return, would guarantee to support Maria Theresa's right to the throne in the councils of Europe. Frederick would also vote for Francis at the election. As Austria's financial situation was notoriously desperate, furthermore Frederick would give her " a few millions " to replenish her treasury (thus making the Habsburgs dependent on the Hohenzollern).

The second alternative was quite simple: If Maria Theresa refused to accept these suggestions, Frederick would befriend all of her actual and potential enemies, such as Bavaria, Saxony, and France, and he would then march into Silesia at once.

It is an historical fact, however, that Frederick never gave her a chance to choose between these two alternatives. Before Botta had returned to Vienna, the Prussian armies were already moving towards Silesia. Only then did Frederick's special envoy, Count Gotter, arrive in Vienna. Gotter was usually popular with women and he was hoping to impress Maria Theresa. He was not aware that she was growing increasingly annoyed with Frederick. She refused to see his representative herself, and Francis, who was gradually being relegated to the post of her private secretary, was told to receive Count Gotter. Francis was accepting her growing domination with surprising meekness. It was as though the sacrifice of his Duchy had broken rather than stimulated his ambition. He dutifully met Gotter on December 20, 1740.

Gotter could not deliver the graceful speech he had prepared for the young Queen, whom he believed to be impressionable, and he was not at his best in this unexpected interview with Francis. With true Prussian tactlessness he bluntly told Francis about the bribes offered by Frederick.

"I bear," Gotter said, "in one hand the salvation of the House of Habsburg, in the other the Imperial Crown for your Highness. The treasury of the King, my master, is at the service of the Queen; he will also secure to her the assistance of his allies, England, Holland, and Russia. In return, he demands the whole of Silesia, and nothing less. The King's determination is immovable."

The conversation between Francis and Gotter has been handed down to us. After Gotter had made his little speech, Francis tried to remain calm. He pointed out that one of the conditions of the Pragmatic Sanction was that his wife's heritage was to be " indivisible." In the name of his wife, he flatly refused to accept any bribes. Then he said that the King of Prussia's suggestions reminded him of a man who had slapped another man's face and then said, I am so sorry, I did not mean it.

Gotter replied: " A part of Silesia will not make my King much richer, nor will it impoverish Austria." Francis answered: " Should I, therefore, to please him, tear the sleeve of my coat to pieces? "—Gotter said: " It is not a question of tearing up a sleeve; it is merely a button on your coat."—Francis asked: " Well, wouldn't I be a ridiculous figure if there were a button missing on my coat? "—Gotter answered: " You could cover it up with your hand."

Their voices were rising; a quarrel was obviously imminent. Maria Theresa had been listening at the door. She thought that the interview had lasted long enough, and she signalled to Francis to end it. If Gotter, surprised to find her there, had considered Maria Theresa a weak, pregnant, and helpless young woman, who listened at doors but was afraid to face such important discussions herself, he was soon to be disillusioned. The answer which she sent him was neither weak nor frightened. The Habsburg tenacity reflected in her letter startled Europe. She instructed Gotter to " return to his master and to tell him that as long as one Prussian soldier remained in Silesia, she would rather perish than negotiate with the King of Prussia."

Gotter was extremely disturbed by this message. He hated having his own judgments upset, and he had thought her such a gentle, motherly girl, a submissive wife. Besides, he was not sure of himself because he believed that his sovereign, Frederick of Prussia, was making a mistake. "I congratulate myself," Gotter wrote rather lamely to Count Podewils, "on not having pushed matters too far. The King is an intelligent Prince and will, I hope, find an honourable way out of this business."

Frederick, however, had no intention of taking his ministers' advice and finding an "honourable way out." "I will give you a problem to solve," he wrote tersely to Podewils. "When a man is in a good position, should he take advantage of it or not? My troops and I are quite ready for anything; if I do not make use of this good fortune, I fail to use an instrument which is actually in my hand; but if I do use it, people will say that I have taken a shabby advantage of my superiority over my neighbour. . . . I have decided that we should take possession of Silesia before the winter, and to negotiate during that season . . . if we acted otherwise, it would be a disadvantage to us."

War was never officially declared. Before Gotter returned to Berlin, the Prussian army was moving forward as rapidly as possible, and on the first of January 1741, Frederick wrote to Podewils in an exalted mood: "I have crossed the Rubicon, my dear Podewils. The drums are beating and the colours flying; my troops are willing, the officers are ambitious, the generals are eager to move; all will be as we wish: a certain instinct for which I cannot account assures me of every kind of good fortune. I shall not reappear in Berlin without having made myself worthy of my origin, and of the

brave soldiers whom I have the honour to command. Adieu."

The Marquis de Beauveau understood Frederick's exaltation. He wrote to Cardinal Fleury that "the King of Prussia's conduct was more like a romance than like history, but the romance may produce fatal results."

As a whole, statesmen in Europe were less tolerant of Frederick. No one, of course, minded a ruthless invasion of another country. But Frederick had not presented to the world any clever excuse proving that he was justified in invading Silesia. Even Podewils wished that some external pretext would arise to justify this advance. Frederick's brazen frankness made the other rulers and statesmen of Europe feel distinctly uncomfortable. They felt that he should have been clever enough to find some good excuse; he should have searched in his family archives for some treaty behind which he could have hidden, thus concealing his intention of crude conquest. His manners had been bad, and he was therefore frowned upon by his elder colleagues on the thrones of Europe.

Their disapproval of her enemy did not make the situation easier for Maria Theresa. Life had become extremely serious, and it was made more difficult for her because her next child was expected in two months' time. Later, when she had learned that it was to be her destiny to be pregnant whenever she faced a crisis, she took this condition more calmly. Now, as a contemporary expressed it, she was a "Princess with a crown of thorns." She herself did not dramatise the situation, but she began to think. She was no longer so sure about the omnipotence of the Good.

CHAPTER SIX

FREDERICK left Berlin with his troops for Silesia on December 14, 1740. He himself admitted later that "the diligence of his army was superior to that of his Ambassador in Vienna: his troops entered Silesia two days before the arrival of Count Gotter in Vienna."

Frederick had been indisposed for several months. When the news of Charles VI.'s death reached Rheinsberg, where Frederick was living, he had been so ill with a fever that his physicians kept the news of the Emperor's death from him for some days. He had not quite recovered when he set out for Silesia. His excitement caused him to suffer a relapse, for he was one of the most nervous men in history. Later, when his campaign proved successful, his generals were surprised at his rapid recovery, and "despite all the fatigues of the War, he was in perfect health."

Before he began the campaign, however, he was still suffering from his painful psychological adjustment to the rôle of a strong man, a rôle he had been imposing upon himself since his father's death. This adjustment, which implied a tremendous mental conflict, made him physically ill, and Voltaire says that when he departed for Silesia he was suffering from the "quartan ague."

"Europe was amazed at the unexpected invasion of Silesia," Frederick himself records in his *Histoire de mon Temps*. "Some accused this invasion of being the flourish of levity; others regarded it as an enterprise

of frenzy. Robinson, the English Ambassador in Vienna, maintained that the King of Prussia deserved to be put under the ban of the Empire."

Whatever was said of Frederick, "the signal for war," as he writes, "was given to Europe. The different powers were everywhere sounding, negotiating, and intriguing to arrange their parties, and to form alliances; but the troops of no power were prepared; none were provided with ammunition; and the King of Prussia profited by this crisis to execute his far-reaching projects."

Maria Theresa's army was less well equipped with ammunition, less well prepared to meet his invasion than the army of any other great power in Europe. Austria's standing army, commanded by Count Ullyses Browne de Camus, was extremely small. Frederick himself records that "there were no more than two Austrian regiments in Silesia." Each of Maria Theresa's provinces still raised and supported its own army. Her military power was not centralised, and she could not easily move an army corps from one district to another.

The Prussians met with little resistance in Silesia, and Frederick's success was made easier by the Protestant inhabitants, who always resented the Habsburg's Catholic régime and welcomed this invader from a Protestant country. Frederick wisely made himself popular with them at once by installing thirty Protestant clergymen in various Silesian districts.

At first Frederick's progress was more like a peaceful occupation after a successful war than a military campaign. On January 3 he occupied Breslau, the capital, with all pomp. The city had surrendered without troubling to defend itself. Glogau, a fortified town near the Polish frontier, was the first city to offer any deter-

mined resistance, but Frederick was too shrewd to attack. He decided to be economical with his resources until he had proceeded farther south. He surrounded the city with a reserve army commanded by Prince Dessau. Orders for the ultimately victorious attack on Glogau were not given until early in March.

Frederick was extremely happy. He had every opportunity of dramatising himself, of seeing himself as a great military figure. He wrote at once to Voltaire, for he longed for the approval of his literary idol:

"We march every morning from seven until four in the afternoon. Then I dine, then work; and then receive tiresome visitors: which means that I must look after numerous insipid details. These consist of difficult people to be pacified; individuals who are too temperamental must be restrained; lazy people must be encouraged to act; and impatient men must be calmed. I must render rapacious people more abstemious; I listen to talkative men, and talk to silent people; I must drink with those who are thirsty and eat with those who are hungry; I must be a Jew with Jews and a heathen with the heathens.

"These are my occupations. I would gladly exchange them for others if it were not for this ghost called Fame which appears to me so often. In truth, it is a great folly, but a folly which a man cannot forget if he is obsessed by it."

Despite the satisfaction expressed in this letter, Frederick was fully aware that to establish his prestige in Europe, to vindicate his ruthless invasion in Silesia, he must have a victorious and sensational battle to his credit. The submissiveness of his enemy irritated him, and he waited impatiently for the Austrian army to assemble in Silesia.

Maria Theresa had already released General Neipperg from the Fortress of Gratz to reinstate him in the army, and she now placed Francis's former tutor in command of her Silesian armies. As this choice shows, she still accepted Francis's advice in military matters; she believed that brave and strong men (though she was no longer sure of his brains, she never doubted his bravery and strength) must be able soldiers. She clung fiercely to the illusion that Francis's earlier fiasco with the army was a ghastly mistake, a misunderstanding through which great injustice had been done him.

General Neipperg decided that it would be useless actively to oppose Frederick of Prussia until a large Austrian army had been assembled in Silesia. Many modern strategists blame Neipperg for this passivity. They believe that if he had taken the initiative early in the Silesian campaign, large sections of the Prussian army might have been dispersed. At any rate, such a prompt attack would have robbed Frederick of some of his youthful self-assurance, he would have become nervous, less able to issue commands and to make quick decisions. Frederick's uncertainty would undoubtedly have furthered Maria Theresa's cause.

At first she unquestioningly accepted Neipperg's and Francis's judgment of the situation, but towards the end of January, when Frederick had occupied practically all of Silesia, she began to doubt Francis's military talents for the first time. And when she had once begun to think independently about any subject, a sure insight of it usually came to her very soon. Now, though she had no knowledge of military tactics and could make no concrete suggestions—quite apart from the fact that it was too late to do so—she realised that Neipperg's dallying would be disastrous for Austria.

Her first written comment on the Silesian campaign on record in the Vienna Archives is dated February 4, 1741. This brief note, addressed to a Colonel Roth who was in command of the Fortress of Neisse, shows that already she had no scruples about communicating direct with her officers of inferior rank. She ignored formality of precedence when necessity arose.

Her note to Colonel Roth indicates that apart from understanding Neipperg's error in judgment, she had also grasped the fundamental weakness in the Austrian temperament, that dilatoriness which has always hampered Austria's public life and had particularly disastrous effects in her military operations.

" I well understand," Maria Theresa wrote to Colonel Roth at this time, " that everything we do is done too slowly. Our slowness will always be our destruction, we never seem in a hurry to perform the tasks which are obviously most necessary."

Many of Maria Theresa's elder advisers were deeply shocked that she should be taking such an active interest in military affairs, in the Silesian campaign. It was difficult enough for these old men to become accustomed to the unprecedented fact that this woman's place was at a conference table, or in a throne-room, but they were convinced that she should not interfere in military affairs. They would have been horrified had they known that she once wrote: " No one would have prevented me from joining my armies myself, had I not continuously been pregnant." Her fourth child was to be born very soon, and her aged and short-sighted counsellors considered this event more important than the War. The Empress, they were convinced, should not upset herself about military operations, when her child might be the longed-for male heir.

Maria Theresa's and Francis's fourth child was born on March 13, while Neipperg's troops were slowly assembling, and Europe was still anxiously awaiting the decisive battle. Luckily for Maria Theresa this child was at last a boy, whom she called Joseph. In her anxiety about Silesia she did not forget to send a silver statue, weighing more than a stone, to the Madonna at the Church of Mariazell. For a short time after her confinement, the war and even her hatred of Frederick of Prussia seemed far away, on another plane. She had produced a male heir, and the immediate problems escaped her mind for a few happy hours.

The people of Vienna, all of Austria in fact, were beside themselves with joy. The unfortunate war was momentarily forgotten, and the infant's birth was celebrated with "triumphs, operas, and masquerades." Money was spent lavishly, and as Robinson wrote to Lord Harrington, "some of the nobility were at the expense of three, four, or even six thousand florins in illuminations."

"What was more remarkable about the thanksgiving service attended by Maria Theresa," Robinson continues in his report, "was that in such crowded streets, where such numbers of Turks and Prussian deserters were straggling and gazing with the common people, the Queen, accompanied by the two archduchesses (her daughter and her sister), went in an open landau, with two horses and only two servants, through the whole town at night. The Grand Duke was on horseback with another part of courtiers, and Prince Charles (Francis's brother) was on foot."

Maria Theresa's subjects, as this passage shows, looked more kindly on Francis now that he was the father of their future ruler. They were gradually

learning to accept him as Maria Theresa's consort. In their rejoicing, the Viennese paid him the compliment of including him in their jests. The people drank to the health of their Queen."

"Zur Gesundheit unserer Königin!
Gelt, Brüderl, sie soll leben.
Wie auch ihr Schatz Prinz Lothring,
Der bringt uns Prinzen z'wegen."

As this verse shows, Francis was becoming popular not as co-regent, but as Maria Theresa's *Schatz*, as her lover, who had made it possible for her to bear a son.

. . . . . .

The first decisive battle of the Silesian Wars did not occur until a month after Joseph's birth. The battle, fought at Mollwitz on April 10, was an overwhelming Prussian victory, for as late as the day before, Neipperg had "not yet made any decisions as to what action he would take." The Austrian army, only fifteen thousand strong, faced a Prussian Army of twenty-one thousand men, and the Prussian infantry was twice as efficient as the Austrian.

Frederick's attitude towards Maria Theresa in particular and women in general is reflected in the text he chose for the thanksgiving service after this victory: 1 Timothy ii. 11–12, "Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection . . . I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness."

Apart from its historical significance, this battle decisively influenced the characters of Maria Theresa and of Frederick the Great. They both grew up, they both became harder. For her it meant the end of her girlhood, of her matter-of-fact acceptance of her Habsburg supremacy. She knew that she must fight. For

Frederick it meant the final annihilation of the wistful, flute-playing youth he had been before his father's death. His father's will had finally conquered him and made him a soldier.

The Austrian defeat at Mollwitz was important not only for the historical development of the eighteenth century. It was the first military landmark in the struggle between Austria and Germany, a struggle which found expression in the War of 1866, and in which in our own day the annexation of Austria by Hitler's Germany may be the final step.

Karl Tschuppik, an Austrian writer, whose *Maria Theresia* is undoubtedly the best military history of her life, writes as follows about the battle of Mollwitz: "France always sided with the rulers of the smaller German principalities against the Emperor. This time, however, Frederick's guns announced that something special was happening: it was the first battle between the Hohenzollern and the Habsburgs, the first duel fought by Prussia, which was rising to power, with the ancient Imperial House."

This battle of Mollwitz, the first outstanding victory of Frederick's career, was won by his father's well-disciplined army under the able leadership of Count Schwerin rather than by the King himself. Frederick lost his nerve completely and ran away from the battlefield. Europe did not hear about his flight until many years later, and even to-day patriotic German historians gloss over his desertion, which to them implies cowardice, by saying that "Count Schwerin urged the King to leave the battlefield so that his person would be safe."

If Schwerin and Frederick's other generals did indeed urge him to leave, it was because his hysterical condition made him a liability rather than an asset to his armies.

He lost control of himself completely when the cavalry, under his personal command, had proved a failure, and the battle seemed lost. Messengers who followed Frederick that night to bring him the news of "his" victory, found him huddled up against an old mill near the town of Löwen about four leagues from the battlefield.

Frederick pulled himself together very quickly. He knew that he could depend on the loyalty and the discretion of his officers, and he wrote Voltaire a glowing account of his victory. Voltaire, who received this letter in Lille when his drama *Mahomet* was being produced, and who knew that his patron's victory would ultimately benefit himself, read Frederick's message to the audience between the acts. "You will see," Voltaire announced after reading it, "that this performance of Mollwitz will ensure success to the performance of my plays."

If Maria Theresa had known about Frederick's flight she would undoubtedly have been comforted, for the moral defeat of a man she hated so violently would have given her satisfaction. As it was, though she was profoundly depressed by the defeat of her army, she did not succumb to her grief. Instead, she tried to keep up the *morale* of her troops and the courage of her generals. She sent General Neipperg a tactful, carefully worded letter and not an outburst of rage:

"We are far from placing the blame of this defeat on you," she wrote to him six days after the battle of Mollwitz; "we appreciate that your efforts were very great, sensible and careful, and we are not dissatisfied with you. But we have heard with displeasure that your commands were not carried out as they should have been by all your staff. For if the attack had not been

made so precipitately by the whole army corps and the cavalry of the left flank, our armies might have been successful."

Maria Theresa probably asked Francis's advice before writing this letter. Undoubtedly, as she was a very tactful woman, she had not yet mentioned her doubts about his military efficiency to him. But her letter to the General shows that she had begun seriously to study strategy, for she gives him some very concrete suggestions. She told him that the infantry, "which included many young and inexperienced soldiers," must be more thoroughly trained and disciplined. She agreed with Neipperg's request to withdraw his troops to Glogau and Neisse, as she knew "that he could not risk a second battle until the men had recovered" from the strain of the battle of Mollwitz.

Obviously, however, Maria Theresa did not appreciate the seriousness of her defeat at Mollwitz, for when, after his victory, Frederick again asked her to hand over Silesia and end hostilities, she refused as indignantly as she had done before the war began.

Even had she already grasped the fact that her disorganised, expensive, and badly commanded army could not possibly compete with Frederick's—or rather his father's—magnificent troops, even had she seen clearly that after her defeat the European balance of power would swing round to her disadvantage, she would undoubtedly have remained firm. She never changed her mind easily, and Mollwitz had made her more conscious than ever of her duty—as she saw it—to her Habsburg heritage.

Before Frederick became King of Prussia, Louis XV. had called him a madman. "C'est un fou; cet homme-là est fou," he had said of the Crown Prince of Prussia.

Now Marshal Belle-Isle himself was sent to see Frederick in Silesia to offer him an alliance with France. A secret treaty between the two great powers, for Prussia had suddenly loomed up in Europe and had risen to that rank, was signed on June 5, 1741.

This alliance had turned the tide in Frederick's favour, and Bavaria, Saxony, Poland, and Spain had decided to support him when they realised that France was making serious advances to him. The *Nymphenburg Document*, signed by these countries, made Maria Theresa's isolation practically complete. The Pragmatic Sanction was dead, and her enemies were already discussing how they would divide her heritage amongst themselves.

"It was stipulated," as Joseph Towers wrote in 1795, "that the Elector of Bavaria, together with the Imperial Crown, should possess Bohemia, Upper Austria, and the country of Tirol; that Augustus III., King of Poland and Elector of Saxony, should be gratified with Moravia and Upper Silesia, and that his Prussian Majesty should retain Lower Silesia, with the town of Neisse, and the county of Glatz."

Before the news of the Franco-Prussian Alliance had reached her, Maria Theresa set out for Hungary with her family. Her enemies had hoped that her Hungarian subjects (and the Magyar nobles were always ready to oppose the Habsburgs) would use her unfortunate position to revolt against the Habsburg rule. These hopes were not realised, for when, late in May, she gave orders that the Diet was to meet in Pressburg to discuss her coronation, these orders were obeyed at once. She arrived in Pressburg on June 20. Her suggestion, tactfully made, that Francis should be crowned as her co-regent, was refused with equal diplo-

macy. The Hungarians clung to their tradition, and on June 25, 1741, she was crowned as King and not as Queen of their country.

Maria Theresa's success in Hungary was due largely to her old friend Count Jean Palffy, who was then almost seventy, and who had been devoted to the Habsburgs throughout his life. He was a typical Hungarian, but his passion for beautiful women and for horses, and his predilection for alcohol had never decreased his diplomatic skill. He was not popular at the Court of Vienna, for his sense of humour often overcame his prudence when he discussed the ageing courtiers in Maria Theresa's cabinet of ministers, but the Hungarians were devoted to him, and he influenced them in favour of the young Queen. He persuaded his compatriots that a dependence on Austria was better than the menacing possibility of Turkish domination.

Robinson, who was present at her coronation, was, as usual, completely charmed by her. "The coronation on the 25th," he writes, "was magnificent and well ordered. The Queen was all charm; she rode gallantly up the Royal Mount, and defied the four corners of the world with the drawn sabre, in a manner to show she had no occasion for that weapon to conquer all who saw her. The antiquated crown received new graces from her head, and the old tattered robe of St. Stephen became her as well as her own rich habit, if diamonds, pearls, and all sorts of precious stones can be called clothes."

Maria Theresa's lyrical biographers have made much of this coronation. Her tears, on this occasion, when she was overcome by emotion during her address in Latin to the Diet—small Joseph, aged three months, in her youthful arms—all these sentimental attractions

are emphasised in many of the accounts of her life. Other historians admire the clever appeal she consciously made to the Hungarians by her "womanliness." Actually, of course, she probably regretted her tears and her lack of self-control, for already she was too self-assured to have stooped to exhibitionist methods. She was growing essentially hard, and though hard people are often sentimental, she was never the type of woman who unintentionally displayed the softer side of her nature.

While she was in Pressburg, she heard about the alliance against her concluded between France and Prussia. This news was a severe shock to her. Sir Thomas Robinson, who was genuinely attached to her, had the painful task of telling her about this alliance.

She was playing cards with some of her courtiers when Robinson was announced. No matter how great were her anxieties, she tried to conceal them in the evening, for Francis liked a gay social life; it bored him when she retired to her study after dinner. And as she was disappointing him in his desire for political influence, she yielded to his personal wishes more submissively than she had done before she came to the throne. In the intimacy of their home life she was an obedient wife. She never forgot wifely responsibilities. To please Francis she even allowed the windows to be closed in her room, though when she was alone, in winter or in summer, she always ordered the windows to be left wide open.

On this particular evening Robinson asked for Francis, saying that he did not want to interrupt the Queen's game of cards.

"I had hardly begun to acquaint His Highness in a few words that all was near lost," Robinson wrote to

Lord Harrington, " that Prussia had signed with France, and I had taken your lordship's letter out of my pocket to make a full confidence, when the Queen entered. She had left her play—had heard I waited for the Duke —had been told the treaty was signed—and that I had received a commission."

" The Grand Duke with a sigh said : ' Well, what is this treaty ? '—By their permission I took a candle in my hand and read your Lordship's letter from one end to another. The Duke could hardly believe that the Treaty had been signed so long ago as on the fifth past. He observed the bad heart of the King of Prussia, who could hold so different a language by himself and afterwards by his Ministers to Lord Hyndford. That now nothing was to be done but perish—perish sword in hand, and with their friends, or save themselves even without their friends. The Queen let fall a few, though tender, reproaches even in my presence, as to the Duke's often having expressed too much hope of the King of Prussia. . . ."

In this interview Robinson urged Maria Theresa to reconsider Frederick's offer and to give up Silesia. " She answered that in conscience, as well as for all manner of political reasons, she would not consent to part with much of Silesia."

Robinson was all the more perturbed by her refusal, as he was aware that England would not support her if she continued this mad war. Robinson " presumed to acquaint her that George II. could not but look upon her reluctancy to oblige him as an ill return for the immense sums and forces raised for her service." The Ambassador then gave her to understand that England would cease to be her friend if she did not accept Frederick's suggestions.

Maria Theresa was as distressed by this prospect as she had been by the news of Frederick's treaty with France. Before she saw Robinson, she may not have known that he as well as Lord Hyndford had visited Frederick in Silesia, and it is certain that she had not heard of Hyndford's famous interview with the young King of Prussia. England had been her one great hope. She still judged international political situations rather too simply, and she had firmly believed that she could continue to count on England's support, for she realised that, as Elector of Hanover, George II. would disapprove of the increasing power of his Prussian neighbour. She was aware, furthermore, of the " inveterate antipathy " between Frederick and his uncle, George II.

Maria Theresa failed to appreciate that after the battle of Mollwitz, Frederick's prestige had already increased to such an extent that England's attitude was bound to change. George II. did not feel that he could afford to remain too friendly with Austria when half of Europe was already against her and the Pragmatic Sanction. Soon afterwards, England signed a " treaty of neutrality " with Prussia, and officially refused to help her further. Maria Theresa was not only shocked, but hurt as well.

By August, when England by her " neutrality " had virtually joined Maria Theresa's adversaries, she was surrounded by enemies, and Russia, who might have come to her assistance, was at war with Sweden. Maria Theresa, therefore, reluctantly agreed to make certain concessions to Frederick. She offered him the Austrian Netherlands, and finally a part of Silesia as well.

In the meantime, the French troops were already crossing the Rhine and Charles Albert of Bavaria was marching into Upper Austria with his army. On

September 15 he occupied Linz, the capital of the province, and a five days' march would bring him to Vienna. He had every intention of proceeding to the capital, but France did not want the Bavarians to become too powerful on the Continent. Belle-Isle, who arrived in Charles Albert's camp, virtually instructed him not to besiege Vienna. Belle-Isle persuaded him instead to march to Prague. Charles Albert, who could not afford to rouse French disfavour, had to obey this suggestion. Besides, as the French troops under his command were more obedient to Belle-Isle than to him, he had no choice but to do as Belle-Isle wished. Charles Albert abandoned his plan of capturing Vienna; he went to Prague, where he had himself proclaimed as King of Bohemia on December 7. In Prague, as in Linz, the population as a whole, as well as several bishops and many prominent aristocrats, were quite willing to accept him as their ruler. Her distant subjects were not yet whole-heartedly loyal to Maria Theresa.

Frederick, who was watching these developments closely, did not wish to see his allies make undue gains in this war which he had begun solely to win Silesia. If France was too successful in this campaign, Frederick knew, her influence in Germany would rise enormously, and in the end Prussia, too, would come under her domination. He therefore decided to accept Maria Theresa's offer of compromise, and on October 9, 1741, at the secret Convention of Klein-Schnellendorf, she gave up Lower Silesia, including Breslau.

Though Maria Theresa was again pregnant and feeling ill she did not allow herself to become less active after the Convention of Klein-Schnellendorf had been signed. Prussia was only one of her many enemies,

and she could not afford to waste her energies on regretting Silesia and hating Frederick. In the first place, she made changes in the command of her armies. She had reluctantly appointed Francis as the nominal head of her forces in Bohemia, but Neipperg had been the real commander. He had been slower than ever when he tried to defend Bohemia, and he was honourably dismissed and appointed as governor of Luxembourg, a post he had held before. Field-Marshal Khevenhüller, a man of almost sixty, who had fought under Prince Eugene and had later distinguished himself in the War of the Polish Succession, and her brother-in-law Charles of Lorraine were placed in command of her armies in Upper Austria and in Bohemia. Francis, to put it plainly, had made a fool of himself when he had been with Neipperg in Bohemia. She had written asking one of her officers to look after him—" the most precious thing she had in the world "—but she had also implied in this letter that her husband should not be allowed to act without the advice of his generals, for his reputation as a soldier meant a great deal to her—" dont je suis très jalouse." By the end of the Bohemian campaign, she was thoroughly disillusioned: Francis would never be an able strategist. While the country was in danger, however, it would have made a bad impression on the people if he had not been on active service. She therefore appointed him as Khevenhüller's assistant.

Charles Albert's army was still in Bohemia, and it was therefore a relatively easy task for Khevenhüller to recapture Upper Austria and penetrate into Bavaria. He could not, however, really enjoy this victory, for on February 12 Charles Albert of Bavaria was crowned as Charles VII., Holy Roman Emperor, in Frankfort, and the Imperial Crown had been taken from the Habsburgs.

Some of her loyal courtiers had a medal struck with Francis's portrait, and the inscription "aut Cæsar aut nihil" engraved on one side of it. On the other side, to show their contempt for the Bavarian Elector, his portrait was shown with the words "Et Cæsar et nihil" ("Cæsar and nothing else").

Maria Theresa had little time to nurse her grief over the loss of the Imperial Crown, for Frederick, alarmed by her success in Upper Austria, broke the Convention of Klein-Schnellendorf on the flimsy excuse that she had not kept it a secret. He moved his army to Bohemia, and attacked her troops, commanded by Charles of Lorraine, at Chotusitz and Czaslau. Neither battle was a decisive victory for Frederick, and he did not actually gain very much by them, except that he again weakened Maria Theresa's forces. But with most of the Continent in arms against her, she was forced, after these defeats, to conclude at least a temporary peace with Frederick. At the preliminary peace of Breslau, which was later confirmed by the Peace of Berlin of July 28, 1742, Frederick was given most of Silesia and the county of Glatz.

Maria Theresa never ceased to be bitter about this Peace. "The Peace of Breslau was forced upon me," she wrote later, "and my hopes based on this Peace were not fulfilled." Above all, the conclusion of this First Silesian War stimulated her loathing for Frederick; at twenty-five hatred had become one of the dominant elements of her character. "I am not made so unhappy by the actual loss of Silesia," she wrote, "as I am by the fact that a neighbour whose character is so low has taken possession of this Province." This outburst was, of course, not strictly a true expression of her real feelings; she was broken-hearted about the loss of

Silesia. As Sir Thomas Robinson reported: "Like Mary of England, in her regret for the capture of Calais, Maria Theresa might have exclaimed that Silesia was written in her heart; and she could not see a native of this Province without bursting into tears."

CHAPTER SEVEN

WHEN Frederick returned to Berlin after the first Silesian War, he was confronted with the task of reorganising his army, rebuilding the fortresses in his new Silesian provinces, and of replenishing his treasury. Despite his attitude of watchful waiting to see what would happen next in Europe, he had leisure to intrigue so that Voltaire would be brought to Berlin to visit him. He showed the Frenchman his poetry, he discussed everything with Voltaire but the international complications of the moment. Compared with Maria Theresa's anxious activities Frederick lived quietly. He had a holiday between wars.

"Here in Berlin," the British Ambassador reported, "one talks of nothing but Voltaire. He reads his tragedies to Queens and Princesses until they weep, and surpasses the King in his satirical remarks and witty ideas. Nobody here is considered as cultured who has not Voltaire's works in his head or in his pocket, or who does not speak in rhymes."

Maria Theresa, on the other hand, had no time for amusements of this kind. The Peace of Breslau-Berlin gave her no respite. It merely meant that one move, a move which she had lost, had occurred in the far-reaching hostilities which are known to history as the Wars of the Austrian Succession. Though in Austria itself the Pragmatic Sanction remained a decisive issue, the entire balance of power in Europe had now become involved in the question of Maria Theresa's

right to the succession. The attitude which the great powers adopted towards Austria would determine the future frontiers of Europe.

In her interesting study of Maria Theresa, Mary Maxwell Moffat describes a popular cartoon which reflects Maria Theresa's situation at the time. This cartoon, known as *The Tables Turned,* " represents a dining-hall with a round table in the middle. The cloth is spread, the covers are laid. A two-headed Habsburg eagle is served upon the central dish. One of its wings is missing. It has been transferred to the plate of Frederick of Prussia, the only member of the company who had contrived to secure a seat at the table and a helping from the dish. Other potentates would fain do likewise ; but the approach to the table is guarded by Maria Theresa, who lays about her with a horsewhip. The immediate object of castigation is the King of France. Though he was never as entirely in her power as is indicated by the cartoonist, there is no doubt about the blows which she was instrumental in inflicting upon him."

It was quite true that after the Peace of Breslau, Maria turned her attention, and her hatred, against France. Naturally she hoped one day to revenge herself on Frederick, to win back her Silesian possessions, but for the moment, so she was fully aware, France was her most formidable enemy. France's threatening ascendancy was, however, an indirect advantage to Maria Theresa, for the Maritime Powers—chiefly England —too, could not afford to allow France and Prussia to become too powerful.

A weakening of Austria would have strengthened France, and Maria Theresa was therefore right when she hoped for more active support from England in the

future. She was learning to consider international politics from a more realistic point of view. She spent hours in her study, conscientiously reading the long and tedious reports of her ministers.

As early as February 1741 the official British attitude towards Maria Theresa had changed, for Walpole's Government had fallen, and Lord Carteret, who had been the leader of the Opposition in the House of Lords during Walpole's Government, became the Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

Carteret had consistently attacked Walpole's anti-Austrian policy. By April 1741 the House had voted subsidies amounting to half a million pound sterling to Austria, and a little later 16,000 British soldiers were sent to Flanders, ready to attack the French when war was finally declared. In June, Admiral Mathews, who had succeeded Admiral Haddock, occupied the harbour of St. Tropez, and Maria Theresa knew definitely that she would be able to count on British support.

Historians have frequently spoken of England's "chivalrous" attitude towards the "helpless young Queen of Hungary" at this period, but as J. F. Bright quite rightly points out, "such a vaunt is futile."—"The English came to her assistance because they hated the Bourbons. The motive of George and his ministers was the safety of his Hanoverian dominions and the desire to appear before the world as the arbiter and peacemaker of Germany."

It was immaterial to Maria Theresa what motives prompted England to alter her policy, all that mattered was that England turned the tide in Austria's favour. England had already concluded a defensive alliance with Russia, this "semi-barbarous colossus," where the Empress Elisabeth, after overthrowing young Ivan's

Government, was now in power. England had also persuaded Augustus of Poland and Saxony to agree to the Treaty of Breslau, and Holland, as Frederick the Great once said in an outburst against the Maritime Powers, "always followed in the wake of England, as a boat follows the man-of-war to which it is attached." So, while Maria Theresa's army was not appreciably strengthened, while she had temporarily lost extensive territories in Bohemia, she had been able, through England, to conciliate several of her enemies; and France, her greatest adversary, was in a perilous position. She could rely on England and all of England's powerful allies to help her.

Several French statesmen wished that Maria Theresa had not been treated quite so harshly by France. Early in 1742, Cardinal Fleury, who died in January 1743 and did not live to see the end of this struggle for the Pragmatic Sanction, wrote privately to General Königsegg, one of her officers. In this letter the old Cardinal, who was jealous of Belle-Isle's ascendancy, made independent overtures of peace to Maria Theresa. Fleury tried to put the blame for the growing tension between Austria and France on Belle-Isle.

The Cardinal naturally expected Königsegg to show this letter to Maria Theresa. He did, and she was furious. She had not forgotten that, not long before, Fleury had said: "The House of Habsburg no longer exists." Besides, she was again pregnant—her daughter Marie Christine, known in the family as "Mimi," was born in the summer of 1742—and pregnancy seemed to heighten all her emotions.

"I will receive no proposition, no project from the Cardinal," she wrote. . . . "I can prove, with documents in my possession, that the French tried to rouse

sedition even in the heart of my dominions, that they made an attempt to overturn the fundamental laws of the Empire, and to set fire to the four corners of Germany. I will transmit these proofs to posterity, as a warning to the Empire."

Events during the next few months proved that Maria Theresa had been justified in firmly rejecting any overtures of peace from France. During the winter of 1742–43 Belle-Isle, who commanded the French troops in Bohemia, had withdrawn to Prague, where he was virtually cut off from all communication with France. If Francis, who was still the nominal commander of the Austrian forces in Bohemia, had been a better strategist, more able to act quickly and decisively, Belle-Isle would have been defeated that winter. For Khevenhüller's armies had been sent to Bohemia to strengthen Francis's forces.

The letters which Maria Theresa wrote to her husband at this time show that her attitude towards him was changing rapidly. She was always hot-tempered, and occasionally she flared up at him about some insignificant thing, thus putting herself in the wrong. Then she would be very penitent and grateful to him for his good-natured tact and patience. As a rule, her manner towards him was affectionate, but there was now a touch of condescension in her tenderness. On him, in turn, her obvious superiority was having a marked effect.

The ambition which had dominated him in his early youth had been very real, but he was not a born fighter. He lacked the strength to assert himself, to realise his ambitions. He was gradually developing into a man who loved pottering about; he was interested in gardens; in a small private laboratory where he hoped to make

gold. He liked opening exhibitions. He was happiest when he wore comfortable slippers and an old coat. Despite his youth, his tastes had suddenly become middle-aged.

In military matters his wife had ceased to look up to him, and she rarely discussed affairs of State with him. She was consistently indulgent towards him; as a woman she was more bound to him than ever, and Francis was undoubtedly a charming lover, but she sometimes wished that she need not pretend even to others that he was an able soldier and statesman.

The letters she wrote to him while he was in Bohemia during this decisive winter reflect her attitude towards him, and show how tactfully she treated him. "Mon cher *Alter*,"—my dear old thing—she once wrote, "I am afraid that this letter will not please you very much." Then, to begin her admonitions, she poses as a weak woman needing advice: "But you will see from this letter that I am telling you all my troubles." After thus preparing him for something unpleasant, she breaks it to him that she has decided to relieve him of his command, though he is to retain the official title as commander-in-chief. General Lobkowitz, a Bohemian, was put in charge of the operations in Prague.

Chiefly because of Francis's earlier inefficiency, Belle-Isle was not forced to retreat from Prague until early in 1743, when all of Bohemia, with the exception of Eger, which capitulated later in the year, had been recaptured by Maria Theresa's armies. She was crowned as Queen of Bohemia on May 12, 1743, the day before her twenty-sixth birthday.

Those of her courtiers who remembered how womanly and how gentle she had been when she was crowned in Hungary, were startled by the change in her. She was

soft and yielding and forgiving no longer. She immediately appointed a Commission to investigate the records of those aristocrats, priests, and townsmen who were suspected of having willingly accepted Charles VII. as their King, who had not opposed the French during Belle-Isle's occupation of the city.

She was particularly bitter towards the aristocrats who had supported Charles, instead of shedding the last drop of their blood in defending her, the rightful Habsburg ruler, and the Pragmatic Sanction. Her Habsburg pride had been profoundly wounded because the crown of Bohemia had passed out of the family for even a short time, and she did not increase her popularity in Prague when she remarked that this crown was now "uncommonly like a fool's cap."

She was ruthless in her persecution of those Bohemians whom she—rightly or wrongly—suspected of being or having been even passively disloyal to the Habsburgs; she had obviously made up her mind to "purge" Bohemia of "disloyal elements." She was particularly relentless towards the Jews in Prague, for she always had an innate antipathy towards the Jewish race; though later, when she wanted to enlarge her park at Schönbrunn, she did not hesitate to borrow 300,000 gulden from Diego d'Aguillar, a Portuguese Jew. In Prague she accused all Jews of being disloyal subjects, and many of them were uprooted and exiled from Bohemia, whether they were guilty of disloyalty or not.

She was a helpless young woman no longer. She was often extremely gay in Prague, she took a childish delight in drifting rapidly downstream on the Moldau in a very small boat. She was proud—as Khevenhüller records in his diary—"of resisting fatigues more successfully than most men were able to do," but when she

considered it necessary, she could rapidly change from a playful young woman into a harsh ruler. She was impatient with her enemy Frederick, who had abolished the death sentence and introduced religious freedom in Prussia as soon as he came to the throne. Even in her youth she was not progressive, and her views on reforms in general and religious freedom in particular never altered. As a young woman in Prague she felt exactly as she did years later when she wrote to her son Joseph :

" What would we be without a dominant religion ? Toleration, indifferentism would be the best means of undermining everything . . . what restraint is there but religion ? None. Neither the gallows nor the wheel. . . . I speak as a politician and not as a Christian. Nothing is so necessary and so beneficial to the people as religion. Would you permit every one to act according to his fantasy ? If there were no fixed cult, no subjection to the Church, where would we be ? Fist-law would result."

Perhaps Francis's indecision had made her feel that she must be strong, and she had not yet learned how to differentiate between strength and hardness. Actually she never fully appreciated the difference. She did not understand that Frederick's reforms indicated that with all his faults he belonged to the dawning age of enlightenment, while she, by her almost tyrannical methods, was entirely a product of the despotic past.

True to her Habsburg traditions, she always considered herself the proprietor and not the guardian or the servant of her people. She never questioned the divine right of her sovereignty, or realised that the continent of Europe was moving towards a new conception of monarchical powers. It was one of the bitterest ironies of history that her daughter, Marie Antoinette,

should have been one of the most famous victims of the sanguinary birth of this new conception.

Maria Theresa believed that severity on the part of a ruler was good; that a loving parent must chastise his child frequently. Besides, to preserve the Habsburg territories, she was determined to maintain the indivisibility of her heritage by any means, however brutal. To this end she was as fanatical as Isabella of Spain during the Inquisition. She was fully aware that her strict rule in Bohemia, a rule which amounted to a wave of terror for the inhabitants, shocked many of her charming and easy-going advisers, but she never excused her actions. To Kinsky, the Chancellor of Bohemia, however, she explained them:

"You will say that I am cruel," she wrote to him. "This is true; but I know that all the cruelties which I have ordered to be committed, so that this country will be preserved for me, will be repaid by me a hundredfold later. I shall make up for them, but now I have closed my heart to pity. . . . I am sorry for you all, for I am making you unhappy, and this is perhaps my greatest unhappiness, but at least I shall always be grateful to you for carrying out my cruel orders."

Quite apart from any humane considerations, it was not wise for Maria Theresa to have been quite so severe with her Bohemian subjects at this time, for, as the brief rule of Charles in Bohemia had shown, many of the inhabitants of her dominions were not yet sincerely devoted to her or enthusiastic about the Pragmatic Sanction. Her harshness gave her adversaries an opportunity to attack her. Frederick of Prussia snatched at this excuse to belittle her at once. "Since the success of the Bavarian troops in Bavaria," he wrote, "the Queen of Hungary, far from proceeding with the equity

and moderation which became her, had treated the Emperor's hereditary countries with inexpressible hardships and cruelty. This Princess, and her allies, had formed designs immeasurably ambitious, the pernicious aim of which was to undermine German liberty for ever; to bring about which end had been, for more than an age past, the principal object of the House of Austria."

Maria Theresa must have known that Frederick was slandering her in Berlin; that many of her subjects were whispering seditiously about her in Prague, but she did not care what any one said. She always had the courage of her emotional as well as her intellectual convictions, and if she once decided to be harsh, harsh she would be.

It was significant of her newly acquired hardness that she contemplated her revenge on Charles VII. as soon as she had successfully re-established herself in Bohemia. Her armies, under her brother-in-law Charles of Lorraine, were already conducting a successful campaign in Bavaria. Charles VII. had been defeated at Simbach, on the eastern frontier of Bavaria, a week before Maria Theresa's coronation in Prague. He had been forced to flee, and nothing was left him of the Holy Roman Empire but the meaningless title of Emperor.

In his *Vanity of Human Wishes*, Johnson describes Charles's miserable position:

"The bold Bavarian, in a luckless hour,
Tries the dread summits of Cæsarian power;
With unexpected legions bursts away,
And sees defenceless realms receive his sway
The baffled Prince, in Honour's flattering bloom
Of hasty greatness, finds the fatal doom;
His foe's derision and his subject's blame,
And steals to death from anguish and from shame."

The French, who had come to Charles's assistance, were defeated at Dettingen on June 27, 1743, where the Austrian forces were supported by Lord Stair's army—known as the "Pragmatic Army"—which was commanded by George II. himself. This battle has a certain significance in English history, and might have been more important still, for George II., who had joined Lord Stair during the battle, was nearly taken prisoner. Since the battle of Dettingen, therefore, English monarchs have never taken part in the actual fighting of their armies.

After the battle of Dettingen, Charles VII. was forced to acknowledge that Maria Theresa had defeated him. He offered to renounce his claims to her dominions. This meant that at last he acknowledged the Pragmatic Sanction. In return he demanded that she return Bavaria to him, and acknowledge his title as Holy Roman Emperor. She declined, for she had decided to continue the war on the side of England.

By the Treaty of Worms, signed by her on September 13, 1743, she pledged herself as an ally of the Maritime Powers, of Saxony, and of Sardinia. By this Treaty she had given her word that she would help Sardinia to drive the Bourbons from Naples and Sicily; she would fight against France and Spain with England, for Spain was threatening Austria's Italian dominions. Elisabeth Farnese, Philip V. of Spain's "turbulent wife," had ambitious plans for her son Don Philip, whom she wanted to make the ruler of Lombardy.

Maria Theresa's alliance with Charles Emanuel, the King of Sardinia, was inevitable. As a former ally of France and of Spain it was necessary for her to win his support, for otherwise he would have helped Elisabeth Farnese to place her son on the throne of Lombardy.

In return for this alliance, Charles Emanuel asked a very large price of Maria Theresa: he demanded a part of Pavia, the Milanese district, and the Marquisate of Finale.

The surrender of these Italian territories made Maria Theresa feel that she was betraying the sacred trust of her ancestors. She signed the treaty with Sardinia with extreme bitterness, and she blamed England for this humiliation, because England in protracted negotiations had virtually forced her to accept Charles Emanuel's proposals.

Marshal Traun, her general in Italy, occupied Modena and drove back the Spaniards with the help of the Sardinian forces, but even this success did not lessen her growing resentment towards England, this ally without whom she could not continue the struggle for her succession.

Despite the sacrifices she had made in Italy, Maria Theresa's position was incomparably better than it had been since her ascent to the throne. An Austrian army under Charles of Lorraine had crossed the Rhine in an attempt to carry out her somewhat fantastic idea of reconquering Lorraine for her husband. This idea was never realised, but her strategy proved successful, for the French army in the Austrian Netherlands was forced to move south to meet the invader's attack.

France did not officially declare war on England and Austria until February 1744. Despite the fact that the question of the Austrian succession had now developed into a European crisis of the first magnitude, the various rulers involved obviously had plenty of leisure to blame each other for this war. George II., for instance, wrote to Lord Hyndford "that the French King ought to be considered as the sole aggressor. . . .

It was a very wicked pretence that the sworn enemies of the House of Habsburg had made use of, in saying that his Britannic Majesty was the sole aggressor. . . ."

There were two rulers in Europe who did not really care whether the responsibility for this war rested with the King of France or the King of England. These two were Maria Theresa and Frederick of Prussia. She now allowed herself to hope that not only would she keep the domains of the Habsburgs intact, but that she might permanently add Bavaria, still occupied by her troops, to her heritage.

Frederick, on the other hand, was feeling distinctly uneasy about her success. He himself admits that " he had always suspected the enemies with whom he had made peace," and that he " had paid particular attention in preparing for whatever might happen." He had also tried to consolidate his position in Europe by marrying his sister Ulrike to the Swedish Crown Prince, and a little German Princess, Sophie Auguste of Anhalt-Zerbst, to the Russian heir Peter. The fact that this insignificant Princess, with whom Frederick dined condescendingly before she left for Russia, later became the formidable Catharina of Russia shows that, occasionally, history has a keen sense of humour.

Since Maria Theresa's victory at Dettingen, Frederick had realised that she might at any time try to capture Silesia. As early as May 1744, as a preparatory measure of defence, he concluded a defensive alliance known as the Frankfort Union with France, Charles VII., the Elector Palatine, and the King of Sweden, who was also the Landgrave of Hessia. Officially this Union had been signed to defend the rights of Emperor Charles, but actually, of course, it had been formed by Frederick to further his own ends.

In September, without giving any warning, and without the consent of Augustus of Saxony and Poland, Frederick marched through Saxony into Bohemia and occupied Prague. Frederick had apparently not heard that Saxony was a secret supporter of the Treaty of Worms, and he thus found himself with a Saxon army in the rear, and an Austrian contingent, under Marshal Traun, pressing down upon him. Traun's strategy was excellent, and Frederick was forced to evacuate Bohemia without fighting a decisive battle. This was Frederick's first profound humiliation since the death of his father, and he never forgave Maria Theresa for it.

Early the next year, as she was constantly on the alert to see what Frederick would do next, Maria Theresa formed a new alliance with England, Holland, and Saxony. Her troops had occupied Gratz, and she experienced a moment of wild hope that she might reconquer all of Silesia. In January, Charles VII., who had been ill ever since he became the Holy Roman Emperor, died of gout and general debility. Maria Theresa was more profoundly convinced than ever that God was on her side.

By May she had persuaded Charles's son, Maximilian Joseph, to support Francis at the next imperial elections. This meant that Bavaria, another of her enemies, had been pacified, and she could concentrate on preparing for Frederick's inevitable attack.

The armies of her English allies, in the meantime, were not being particularly successful. The English were defeated by the French under Marshal Saxe at Fontenoy on May 11. Maria Theresa had opened negotiations with Elizabeth of Russia, hoping to win her active support. When Frederick, who had been fearing Russian intervention, heard about these negotiations, he

decided to force a decisive battle with Maria Theresa's forces. He won two brilliant victories over the Austrian and Saxon armies at Hohenfriedberg in June and at Soor in September.

After these victories, Frederick thought the time had come to talk about peace. With his feminine insight into human character, Frederick offered Maria Theresa the one thing which he knew would make her consider ending hostilities, for despite his victories in the Second Silesian War, so he knew, she was stubborn enough to continue the war unless he offered her acceptable terms of peace. If she would agree to peace, in which it was stipulated that he would keep Silesia for all time, he promised to acknowledge the Pragmatic Sanction and to support Francis at the next imperial elections. This peace, the Peace of Dresden, was finally signed in December 1745. Maria Theresa had paid the price of Silesia for this Peace, and thousands of human lives had been lost, but she had forced Prussia to acknowledge the Pragmatic Sanction, and to uphold her succession.

. . . . . .

Francis Stephen of Lorraine was crowned as Holy Roman Emperor in Frankfort on September 13, 1745. Maria Theresa was profoundly moved. Not only had the Imperial Crown returned to her family; not only had she thus recovered what she considered an inalienable right; more than that: Francis, her husband, was now a crowned head, her equal before the eyes of the world.

To the utter amazement of every one concerned, however, Maria Theresa refused to be crowned with him. She wrote to Francis, who was already in Frankfort, that if he insisted, if he tried to persuade her to be crowned with him when she got there, she would refuse

to be present in Frankfort even as a spectator. Nothing could make her change her mind. The letters in which Francis urged her to be crowned with him incidentally reflect the fact that his French had markedly deteriorated since he was a lad, and that his spelling had become steadily worse: "Je vous le repete," he wrote to his wife on August 5, 1745, "ille me sauble que vous deverie ansi vous faire couronne, care san cela fera ici un tres moves efet."

"The Queen," Francis finally wrote to Count Ulfeld the Minister of Foreign Affairs, "has informed me that she does not intend to be crowned at Frankfort. I leave you to judge what an effect this will produce. I fear, however, that rather than give way, she will not come at all, which would be extremely unfortunate. For the coronation would afford her opportunities of meeting many of the Princes of the Empire, and she would understand so well how to overcome their prejudices and win their goodwill. Speak to her on the subject, and persuade her that there is nothing in the ceremony incompatible with her kingly dignity."

Later, many people in Europe claimed that Maria Theresa had not allowed herself to be crowned as the consort of the Holy Roman Emperor, because she was again pregnant and shy of appearing in this condition in public. Ulfeld and Francis, however, of course realised that this was ridiculous, for had she felt any shyness about her many pregnancies, she would have been confined to her room for years. Her daughter Marie Christine had been followed by Elisabeth, who was born in 1743; by Charles, her son who died as a youth, in January 1745; and to her it seemed only natural that she by the next autumn should be expecting another child.

Maria Theresa herself did not wish to divulge the reasons for her refusal to take part in the coronation; and if she did not care to discuss a subject, her face became stern and forbidding beyond her years. Ulfeld, however, invented his own theories for her refusal.

"I have done my best," he wrote to Francis, "but Your Royal Highness knows that when Her Majesty has once made up her mind there is nothing to be won by persuasion. She gave me no answer, except that she refused to be crowned. Moreover, she said that if she believed that her presence in Frankfort would cause any attempt to be made to surprise her into submission to the ceremony, she would decide at once to remain away. I tried in vain to find out the reason for her decision. So far as I can guess, though I may be wrong, she feels that, having twice been crowned as a King, there would be something derogatory in being crowned as a consort. In fact, she said one day, that as far as coronations were concerned, she would keep to the sex —the male sex—that had been assigned to her on such occasions. I represented to Her Majesty that if it was past hope that she should change her mind, it would be wiser at least not to announce her intention. The necessary paraphernalia could be sent to Frankfort, and she could excuse herself on the grounds of her physical condition."

Maria Theresa never left any record of the reasons for her decision. Perhaps she wanted to be merely a spectator on Francis's great day, so that, for once, she could look up to him, so that she could see him receive honours, which she had prepared but which he seemed to have earned by himself. Besides, had she been crowned with him, more attention would have been shown her than him. Perhaps, too, in common with

many adoring wives of ineffectual and charming husbands, she indulged in fantasies about him; perhaps she looked forward to seeing him before her, crowned in State, as the mighty Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. As a child, in her intense hero-worship, she had always pictured him as a great and powerful ruler. The fact that he was neither great nor powerful, that the Holy Roman Empire itself was worn out and powerless, would not disturb the flights of her imagination as long as she herself maintained the attitude of an admiring spectator.

. . . . . .

It was astonishing that she was as full of vitality as usual at the close of 1745. She had experienced a terrible year, quite apart from the defeats and terrible anxieties of the war. The death of her only sister Marianne, in child-birth, was a serious shock for her, especially as Marianne had always been a particularly healthy and placid woman, and no one had ever contemplated that she would die so young.

Early in 1744, Marianne had been married to Charles of Lorraine, and had left Vienna for Brussels with him. Charles, with Marianne as his co-regent, had been appointed as Regent of the Netherlands as a reward for his military services to Maria Theresa.

Marianne's child was born in the autumn of 1745, and her condition was so serious that the Last Sacrament was administered. Count Wenzel Kaunitz, who had represented Maria Theresa at several international conferences and who had been sent to Brussels to advise Marianne on affairs of State while her husband was at the front, sent pessimistic reports about the Grand Duchess's condition to Vienna. When Engels, the Court physician from Vienna, who was attending the

Archduchess, proved unsatisfactory, Kaunitz, always a man to use his own initiative in a crisis, had sent to Leyden for van Swieten, one of the most distinguished physicians of the day. But he was too late. Archduchess Marianne died on December 17. Maria Theresa was in a state of abject unhappiness. Her entire childhood, her memories of a care-free life, seemed to have been taken from her with this sister. Even in her sincere personal grief, however, she never for an instant forgot what this loss of her only sister would mean to the Family, to the Dynasty. She was now her father's only surviving child.

She wrote to van Swieten, whom she later summoned to Vienna as her personal physician: "God could have sent me no more terrible disaster than the death of my sister. Every day my love for my family increases. They say that time heals grief of this kind. Time will only make me feel my loss more keenly. Though it is the ninth month, I have not suffered physically from the shock. I believe that God has a purpose to fulfil through me. By His grace I shall find support on the path He wishes me to tread—a path of disappointment, sorrow, and weeping. I submit to His will and look for no reward in this life. Amidst the trials of my reign no thought was so sweetly consoling as that of the continuance of the Dynasty in a double line. I pictured the two families mutually helpful, mutually conducive to the welfare of the Monarchy. I dreamed that the fulfilment of these innocent aspirations would be the comfort of my declining years. But God has decided otherwise. To Him let me offer as a sacrifice everything that I ever hoped for myself."

Though, as this letter shows, the death of her only sister had shaken the Empress profoundly, she had

already developed that characteristic essential in every successful statesman: she never allowed her personal joys or griefs to interfere with her public duties. She was beginning to close up her emotions into separate compartments, so that anxieties in one part of her life did not encroach on another and make her less efficient. She did not allow the worry about one of her children —and by 1745 she was the mother of five, two having died in infancy—to make her less aware of her personal and wifely responsibilities towards Francis. And she never permitted her intense personal need of him to influence her in her political decisions. Her love of God was the one emotion which was interwoven in all of her relationships: God had given her a husband and children, God had elected her as the ruling Habsburg, God had decided that she must defend her heritage by armed force. To her every war she fought, therefore, was a holy war.

The general European conflict continued three years after the Peace of Dresden in 1745. The Austrian armies made headway in Italy and recaptured Milan, Guastalla, and Parma, but in the Netherlands the French armies, under Marshal de Saxe, inflicted serious defeats on the Austrians and their allies. These French advances culminated in the defeat of Charles of Lorraine at the battle of Rancoux. Count Wenzel Kaunitz was forced to move the Austrian Embassy to Aix-la-Chapelle, where peace was finally concluded on May 18, 1748. By this Treaty the Pragmatic Sanction was generally acknowledged in Europe, and Francis was recognised as the Holy Roman Emperor. After lengthy negotiations, Austria regained her Netherland Provinces, but she was forced to surrender the provinces she had conquered in Italy. Though Maria Theresa bitterly resented

her losses in Italy, she welcomed the peace, though she must have known that it had by no means terminated the European conflict. For the belligerent rivalry between England and France, between Austria and Prussia was not ended; this struggle for European supremacy was merely put to sleep for a few years under heavy parchment documents of peace.

France had not suffered any territorial losses during the War, but Fleury's and Belle-Isle's scheme of splitting up Germany into small and powerless states, thus increasing France's influence in Europe, had actually decreased France's chances of competing successfully with England as a world power. For England, in the meantime, was gaining supremacy on the high seas and establishing her position in North America.

Maria Theresa, and Kaunitz, who had negotiated this peace for her, had been taught by this war that not France, but Prussia, was now Austria's most dangerous enemy. To combat Prussia in the future, the Maritime Powers would no longer be such useful allies, because obviously the next war would be fought in the centre of Europe. The lessons Maria Theresa learned from the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle first suggested to her that she must approach France, her hereditary enemy. Frederick of Prussia's ascendancy had completely altered the political divisions of Europe. As Macaulay says in his essay on Frederick the Great, "the real gainer by the War of the Pragmatic Sanction had been neither France nor Austria, but the upstart of Brandenburg."

CHAPTER EIGHT

EVEN before the Peace of Aix, Maria Theresa had clearly recognised the chief causes for the adversities she had suffered during the war. Obviously, the principal reason for her country's weakness was the disjointed condition of her territories, the lack of a central authority, and the fact that there was so little co-ordination between her three Kingdoms and her territories in various parts of Europe. Her small, inadequate, and badly staffed army—ineffectually commanded by over three hundred and fifty generals, who all demanded and received high salaries—and the country's disastrous financial condition were really the results of this disorganisation within her Empire.

Bohemia, Austria, and Hungary were governed by different laws; separate and often antagonistic chanceries were maintained in Vienna for the administration of the three countries, which were loosely connected by the Crown. These three Kingdoms, furthermore, were in turn split up into innumerable estates and provinces, which were governed in a semi-feudal manner. Their heritage from the old Feudal System caused the nobles, especially in Hungary, to cling jealously to their rights, and they resented any interference from their sovereign in Vienna.

"The nobility," as Maria Theresa commented on this situation, "has been too well treated and has become so powerful that the nobles are more feared and respected than the sovereign. The sovereign is often

considered a mere stranger, and that is why the country as a whole is often exposed to disasters."

To raise sufficient taxes, to obtain the necessary financial support for the army, to enlist soldiers, Maria Theresa was obliged to go before the assemblies of her three Kingdoms every year. The various subsidies to the Crown were granted for only twelve months, and apart from this, the contributions levied from her various domains were not fairly distributed, or based on any fixed arrangement. Hungary's population was larger than Bohemia's, Hungary was the wealthier of the two countries, but the Hungarians paid only a third as much annually to the Crown as Bohemia. Even later, when Maria Theresa had successfully introduced various reforms, the Magyar nobles remained stubborn; they could not see why they should raise troops for the defence of other parts of the empire, or why they should pay higher taxes than those to which they had been accustomed. As far as Hungary was concerned, the Empress was forced to accept a compromise.

As soon as Maria Theresa had recovered from the birth of another child after the Peace of Aix—a daughter who died in infancy—she set about the tremendous task of reorganising the administration of her country. All of her reforms were to be based on a centralisation of authority in the Crown, that is to say, in herself. The relics of the Feudal System were to be abolished in Austria, and a "benevolent despotism," as she called it, was henceforth to govern her country.

No historian can deny that her methods were often more despotic than benevolent, and only romanticists avow that her interest in reform was prompted chiefly by a desire to make her subjects happier. On the contrary, her point of view was like that of a modern

industrialist whose one concern is the success of his business enterprise. He pays decent wages and gives his employees good working conditions, so that they will be efficient cogs in his money-making machine. Maria Theresa, whose *idée fixe* was her country, reorganised its administration so that every Austrian, every Bohemian, and every Hungarian would become a more valuable citizen or a more useful soldier.

"It is true," as J. F. Bright points out, "that she had adopted a noble conception of the duties of a sovereign, and that she was gifted with a sensibility easily touched by the joys and sorrows of her people. But the overmastering inspiration of her actions lay not so much in her desire to secure their happiness as in her determination to support the greatness of the State, the efficiency of the army, and the acquisition of an adequate and permanent revenue. To these objects were subordinated all administrative and financial measures."

When Maria Theresa began her reforms, she became poignantly conscious of another great handicap which had hampered her during the war; her ministers were extremely inefficient. Most of them were too old and too bound up in traditions to understand the need for administrative or any other changes. And they had never grasped the fact that the balance of power in Europe was shifting. Besides, age had not made these men less self-interested or more honest and, as Maria Theresa herself expressed it, " . . . every minister was chiefly concerned in finding out how any matter in consideration would affect himself."

Several of her senile ministers had, of course, been removed by death. Maria Theresa, who, like many religious individuals, was always deeply moved by death

itself, even by the death of an enemy, referred respectfully to these losses. "Providence," she wrote, "had relieved me by death of councillors too prejudiced to give useful advice, but too respectable and meritorious to be dismissed, . . . but unless God himself had ended their careers by death I should never have been able to improve the situation, for I preferred to suffer rather than to make any final decisions which would have harmed the reputation of another human being."

Now, however, she realised that she could no longer wait for her old ministers to die. She must appoint younger and more modern men, or her reforms would not succeed, and she would do her country infinite harm.

She chose Count Wenzel Kaunitz, who had negotiated the Peace of Aix for her, as her Foreign Minister. He became her closest political friend, and it was partly due to his insistence that she decided, first of all, to concentrate on domestic reforms. She chose Count Ludwig Haugwitz, a large-boned Silesian aristocrat, whose every gesture was ungraceful, as her Minister of the Interior, or, as he was then called, as the President of the *Directorium*. He was assigned the task of reforming the army. She appointed Count Rudolf Chotek, a Bohemian, who was personally antagonistic to Haugwitz, to reorganise the system of taxation in her territories.

Haugwitz's aim was a standing army of 108,000 men, and annual subsidies amounting to 14,000 gulden for the support of this army. The army and these sums were to be guaranteed for a period of ten years by the three Kingdoms. While he discussed this Ten-Year Plan with Maria Theresa he was already busy on minor, and yet extremely important, reforms; the size of regiments became uniform; the dress of the soldiers and the officers was to follow fixed patterns; military camps were

established and manœuvres arranged; the officers were given a scientific training; though, as was the case in the Prussian Army, no one, no matter how able, could become an officer unless he was an aristocrat.

The Ten-Year Plan, known in history as the "Ten-Year Recess," was not adopted until Maria Theresa had struggled for several years with the Estates, and until she had exercised the despotic power she had recently proclaimed as her right. She met with great resistance from the aristocracy, because the new military taxes were to be contributed by the aristocrats as well as by the peasants and rent-payers. The latter still paid higher military taxes in proportion to their property and income than the wealthy landowners.

Haugwitz's plan was a revolutionary measure, for it deprived the aristocracy of the complete freedom from taxation which they had enjoyed for so many centuries. In France and other countries these privileges of the nobility remained uncontested for several decades longer.

In his reform of indirect taxes, Chotek was as unpopular with manufacturers and traders as Haugwitz was with the aristocracy. Chotek concentrated on one aim: the economic unification of the Empire and the centralisation of the country's resources in the Crown. To this end, with the Queen's co-operation, he decreased the internal tolls, which were levied when goods left one province of the Empire and entered another; he surrounded the whole country with a tariff wall so high that in many cases imports became prohibitive; he built roads, and improved transportation within the Empire to encourage domestic trade.

Chotek also floated government loans and established monopolies to encourage industry and trade, but his reforms were not entirely successful. As is so

often the case when high tariffs are introduced, the economic situation of the people as a whole was not improved. In general, however, despite the fact that Hungary refused to be included in the new tariff regulations, Chotek's reforms contributed towards the unification of the Empire, and this, after all, was Maria Theresa's dominating desire.

Even her enemies had to admit that, as a whole, her efforts to raise the financial and military standards of her country had succeeded. Frederick of Prussia, who viewed her more objectively than she judged him, admitted in his *Histoire de mon Temps* that "Maria Theresa prepared in the secrecy of the Cabinet those great projects which she afterwards carried into execution. She introduced order and economy, unknown to her predecessors, into her country's finances; and her revenues far exceeded those possessed by her father even when he was master of Naples, Parma, Silesia, and Serbia. She had learned that it was necessary to introduce a better discipline into her army, she annually organised military camps in her provinces; she visited these camps herself, so that she might animate the troops by her presence and bounty. She established a military academy in Vienna, and collected the most skilful professors of all the sciences which tended to elucidate the art of war. By these institutions the army acquired under her auspices such a degree of perfection as it had never attained under any of her predecessors, and this woman accomplished designs worthy of a great man."

Frederick, who was largely concerned with Maria Theresa as an enemy or a potential enemy in times of war, was naturally most interested in her military reforms, in the changes of her financial system which enabled her to maintain her new army. He and her

other friends and enemies abroad paid less attention to her purely domestic reforms, such as the reorganisation of the educational system in Austria.

Besides, Frederick was not impressed with her educational reforms, for though he despised his own subjects as he did all Germans, he had a profound respect for learning as such, and he was vitally concerned with the enlightenment of his age. Maria Theresa, on the other hand, was in no sense an intellectual. Though she enjoyed gala performances at the Court theatre, she was not interested in the drama or in literature.

She disliked new ideas, and she had no curiosity whatsoever about abstract theories. She considered intellectual pursuits as a dangerous waste of time. They were dangerous, so she believed, because they were often godless and tended to attack religion. She once, for instance, warned her daughter, Marie Antoinette, never to read any book or pamphlet which had not been approved by her father confessor.

Maria Theresa feared her brilliant contemporaries, such as Voltaire, whose non-acceptance of the existing order was expressed in biting irony. *Zaire* was once produced at her theatre in Vienna, but thereafter all of his other plays—*Mahomet*, *Mérope*, *Semiramis*—and his prose were completely ignored by her and her court.

"For my part," she once wrote to Dr. Gerard van Swieten, whom she summoned to Vienna after the death of her sister as her adviser in educational affairs as well as her personal physician, "I dislike everything that goes by the name of irony, and I consider it incompatible with Christian, neighbourly love. Why should any one waste time reading or writing such things? Our language does not lend itself to this kind of light jesting."

This passage reflects Maria Theresa's narrow-minded attitude towards learning. Her interest in education was purely practical. She was a complete utilitarian, and she had no understanding whatsoever for the pleasure some human beings derive from the pursuit of knowledge as such.

Actually, her so-called reform of the educational system, her far-reaching censorship of books and of learning, was extremely reactionary.

" To the injudicious bigotry of the Empress," as Sir Nathaniel William Wraxall once wrote from Vienna, " may chiefly be attributed the deficiency (in learning). It is hardly credible how many books and productions of every species, and in every language, are proscribed by her. Not only Voltaire and Rousseau are included in the list, from the immoral tendency or licentious nature of their writings; but many authors whom we consider as unexceptionable or harmless, experience a similar treatment. A sentence reflecting on the Catholic religion; a doubt thrown upon the sanctity of some hermit or monk of the Middle Ages; any composition in which the pleasures of love are warmly depicted; for I by no means speak of those licentious writings which it is the duty of every government to suppress; in a word, any work where superstition is attacked or censured, however slightly, attracts immediate notice, and is instantly prohibited under severe penalties."

It is a curious fact that Dr. van Swieten, who was in many ways an enlightened man, was willing to assist Maria Theresa in her resistance to the enlightenment of her age. He was appointed as the Prefect of the Imperial Library. He also became the Director of the Medical Faculty of the University. Apart from these official posts, however, he also advised the Empress in

her reforms of the entire system of education in Austria. In this educational programme, too, Maria Theresa never for an instant forgot the ultimate objective of all of her reforms: the centralisation of authority in her person. The University of Vienna, for instance, which had been a private corporation, became part of the government's educational department, and thus came directly under her control.

The new centralisation of authority was in some ways beneficial to education. Examinations were made uniform in all of the secondary schools in the country; all schoolmasters had to be approved by a responsible commission in Vienna; the standards of tuition rose in all Austrian schools.

Before this time, education had been dominated by the Jesuits. Maria Theresa startled many of her religious friends by encouraging the appointment of laymen as school-teachers. She herself had been educated by Jesuits, and she never dismissed her Jesuit confessor, but under van Swieten's influence she gradually decreased the influence of the Order in Austria. From a practical point of view, it does not matter whether she restricted the power of the Jesuits because she was enlightened or merely because the great influence of the Order was incompatible with the supreme authority of the Crown. The fact remains that, long before she reluctantly suppressed the Order altogether in Austria in 1773, she had begun to curtail the Jesuits' activities in her Kingdoms.

At times, in fact, devout and bigoted Catholic though she remained to the end of her life, she resented the privileges enjoyed by the clergy. "I do not think it wise," she wrote when she was contemplating her educational reforms, "to make more concessions to the

clergy. They enjoy too many privileges as it is, and they do not share their riches with the people. All of the convents tend to overstep their rights, and many of them try to gain possession of goods belonging to the State."

. . . . . .

After the Peace of Aix, Maria Theresa did not make a deliberate effort to reform and change her own private life so that she would be better able to meet her growing responsibilities. She never gave herself up to self-analysis; modern psychologists would have called her an extrovert. Without any contemplation of her own character and abilities, however, she had gradually imposed an even greater discipline on herself; she allowed herself fewer pleasures; she paid less and less attention to her personal appearance. Her one concession to feminine beauty—though she was now only a *little* over *thirty*—was her almost pathetic attempt to have her hair dressed as Francis liked it. She drove the lady-in-waiting, who was assigned to this task, almost mad with her impatience, and the unfortunate girl admitted later that she had not had a peaceful moment while she was in the service of the Queen.

The duties of Maria Theresa's personal attendants were particularly arduous, as she never remained in bed after four o'clock in the summer and five o'clock in the winter. This strict routine must have been extremely difficult for her family as well as for her attendants. Francis never rebelled, but it was undoubtedly trying for a man who increasingly enjoyed the comforts of life to be roused so early in the morning and to see his wife begin the day's work at four o'clock. He must always have bitterly resented her insistence that they share the same bedroom.

"She spends her entire morning," a contemporary at her Court records, "reading dispatches and documents and in conference with her ministers. She dines at one o'clock and then rests, but never for longer than half an hour. She often dines alone to gain time in winter and in summer, then she hurries off for a short walk, but while she is walking she studies more dispatches and documents. She dines in the evening from seven to eight, often she takes only a cup of soup; she takes another short walk before going to bed.

"The Queen never pays the slightest attention to her health, for she has complete confidence in her strength and her resistance. She is very warm-blooded and often sits before an open window even in the coldest winter; as a rule the windows to her apartments are wide open, which drives her entourage to despair. Her physician has often remonstrated with her about this habit, but she laughs at him. She has been seen at the Opera a few hours before the birth of one of her children, and hardly has the news of her confinement spread when she is seen driving rapidly through the streets or working in her study."

Her vitality was indeed tremendous, and her ability for hard work was her greatest talent. She had no extraordinary political gifts, but her sure instinct for her own limitations—an instinct which later served her well in the choice of her ministers—made it possible for her, by consistent effort, to attain as much as a political genius who was not endowed with her persistent energy. Increasingly, she devoted her entire life to her work. She had given up many of her favourite enjoyments, such as dancing. During the war, she danced only at balls given to celebrate some victory of her armies; contrary to most Austrians (and when one thinks of

their delicious cooking no one can blame them) she ate very little, and drank hardly at all.

"The Queen still loves pleasures," Count Podewils reported to Frederick the Great, "but she never allows them to distract her from her duties. She used to be passionately fond of dancing and she attended many masked balls, but she has now given this up almost entirely. She still enjoys singing and playing the spinet, but her recreation is now usually limited to long walks or long horseback rides. You will remember that she cultivated her horsemanship when she was crowned in Hungary, but at the time she did so for political reasons. She continues to ride, however, for reasons of health and because she enjoys it. She rushes through the country in every sense of the word; occasionally she stops for a cup of coffee or a meal with friends. She often stops at the *Richterhaus* in Linz, or the *Jammerpepi* at Baden, or at *Peperl's* in the Prater. Sometimes, too, the Queen takes three- or four-hour walks in the country, but she rarely goes stag-hunting, and then only to please her husband."

Apart from the fact that Maria Theresa now had so little time for recreation, she had lost much of the physical buoyancy of her youth. She was fast developing a middle-aged attitude towards the lighter sides of life; she was becoming extremely serious. She was only in her early thirties, but her many pregnancies had begun to tell on her, and she was gaining weight rapidly. Though she was so young in years, a contemporary writes of her as though she were a well-preserved woman of forty-five. "She is still a beautiful woman," this foreign diplomat to her Court commented with surprise when he saw her, for her impressive manner, her mature severity, made him forget that she was only thirty-three.

It was generally admitted at the Court, at least in whispers, that Francis, too, felt that his wife had aged. Maria Theresa devoted as much time as she could spare to making Francis contented in his home, but she was not always successful. When the great care was mentioned which she devoted to the dressing of her hair, it was said that Francis "was a husband who was too inclined to notice other silken curls." A contemporary in Vienna reports that Francis "arranges secret little suppers and merry parties, but the Empress's jealousy restrains him. As soon as she notices that he is courting a woman, she sulks and causes him thousands of vexations. The Empress knows about his amorousness; this has aroused her mistrust and she spies upon him everywhere. Nevertheless it is rumoured that he arranges his little parties pretending that he is going hunting."

So far, Francis had not entered into any serious liaison, but Maria Theresa must have known that he was flirting more or less seriously with other women. There was almost an open scandal about a somewhat mysterious but beautiful dancer called Eve Marie Violet, who left Vienna very suddenly and unexpectedly, probably after the Empress heard about her existence.

Francis would have been a strange man indeed if he had been faithful to his wife, who was always preoccupied with affairs of State, always about to become a mother, always hurrying from one conference to another, always so obviously his superior intellectually, and who, above all, though she would never have admitted this fact even to herself, really cared more for her Habsburg heritage than she did for her husband, or anything else on earth. The dynasty was a Cause; Francis an individual who made her personally happy. She really

loved him for the happiness he gave her, for being a charming lover and the father of her children rather than for himself. Perhaps, or even probably, she herself was never fully conscious of her own attitude towards him.

Maria Theresa was extremely reserved about her private affairs, and she has left us no record of her state of mind when she realised that Francis was unfaithful to her. Throughout her life she had few women friends in whom she might have confided—a Countess Kokorzawa, a lady-in-waiting, is the only woman mentioned at this time as her constant companion, and Countess Rosalie Edling and Countess Enzenberg, are the only women to whom, as an older woman, she wrote affectionate letters.

Her lack of confidantes must have increased her misery; she was jealous even of Francis's sister, Charlotte of Lorraine, who had come to live in Vienna in 1745. Outwardly Maria Theresa remained calm, but her increasing jealousy of her husband's mistresses was reflected in her own puritanism; her intolerance of any irregular relationships at her Court; her prudish opposition to any human passions not blessed by the Church.

Sir Nathaniel Wraxall later wrote that—"The Empress, rigidly virtuous in her own conduct, faithful to the marriage bed, and never suspected of female weakness, makes very little allowance for the indiscretions of others. She crushes every degree of libertinism beneath the weight of her displeasure. A woman of condition, if known to be frail, unless her frailty be confined to one lover, and managed with the utmost attention to privacy and decorum, is certain to receive an order to quit Vienna: perhaps she is obliged to languish

out life in some obscure provincial town of Hungary, Austria, or other parts of her Imperial Majesty's dominions."

It has been consistently rumoured among historians, and sometimes stated as a fact, that Maria Theresa confided her anxiety about Francis to Dr. van Swieten, her physician. It is believed by many that she wrote to van Swieten asking him how she could make herself more attractive to Francis. It is very possible that she did so, but as she had the habit of destroying her private correspondence, it is not surprising that no such letter from her, or van Swieten's answer, has been preserved in the Vienna archives.

Outwardly, these conflicts between Francis and his wife were never apparent in their household, which was run efficiently and smoothly. Though Maria Theresa was constantly insistent about her rights as a sovereign, or perhaps because of this insistence on important issues, she was extremely informal in her home. Count Khevenhüller, whose diary is the best record of her Court, was often profoundly shocked by her neglect of etiquette. Once, when he pompously conducted the wife of the new Venetian Ambassador to the anteroom of her study, where her under-secretary was to announce to her secretary and he, in turn, to her, that the visitor had arrived, the Empress seriously annoyed the Court by sending out a simple chambermaid to fetch the lady.

For years after she became Queen, Khevenhüller had hoped that when Francis was finally elected as the Holy Roman Emperor the royal household would take on new dignity, [show greater respect for forms. But the Count was to be bitterly disappointed. Francis preferred a comfortable chair and a few friends who shared his passion for cards, for gambling, and for hunting, to

pompous functions; and Maria Theresa continued to announce her preference for short, quick bows instead of long, deep obeisances.

At heart, however, though Maria Theresa could be informal in her own home when she felt inclined, she took honours and titles very seriously. She herself was severe with her aristocracy when occasion arose, but she rigidly upheld the prestige of the Austrian nobility. Precedence was important, and foreigners, at first taken in by the superficial informality of her Court, soon learned how important it was for them to memorise the exact titles of all of her courtiers.

Sir Robert Murray Keith, one of the most humorous English diplomats in the eighteenth century, was highly amused when he came to Vienna as British Ambassador. "If I could but persuade His Majesty," Keith wrote, "to lengthen my little stunted name of Keith by five or six syllables, I do not despair of obtaining the hand of the fair Feretina de Podstcaksky Lichtenstein, niece of Count Grazalkovicz de Gyarach, Conservator of the Crown of the Kingdom of Hungary, etc."

. . . . . .

Maria Theresa was never informal with her children. From them she demanded the most correct and proper manners. She was just but extremely severe with them; she was a more conscientious than affectionate mother. They kissed her hand at certain hours, and on certain occasions, but there was little spontaneity in her relationship with them. Throughout her life, as she often declared, she hated surprises of any kind. She disliked sudden flights of imagination, and her children were crushed into prearranged routine.

She expected of the very young the same iron self-discipline which she imposed so successfully on herself.

She had an aversion to disobedient children, and she occasionally stopped in the street to reprimand strange little boys and girls—her future subjects—if their behaviour displeased her.

After the Peace of Aix, she had seven children living, three sons and four daughters: Joseph, Charles, Leopold, and Marianne, Marie Christine, Elisabeth, and Amelia. Naturally, as Joseph was her heir, the Empress centred her attention on him, and a regiment of tutors was brought to Vienna to educate him and his brothers.

Joseph was a particularly sensitive and difficult child. During his infancy he was very much spoiled by both his parents, and then, when he was a little older, his mother was surprised that "her son would not obey." When he was taken from his nurses at the age of six and handed over to his tutors, her instructions were very severe. Though corporal punishment was not usually inflicted on Habsburg Princes, she once ordered him to be caned. When it was respectfully pointed out to her by Joseph's tutors that her order offended against all traditions, she merely remarked: "Well, look at the Habsburg Princes; their characters have shown that they have not been sufficiently chastised."

"Since my son," she wrote to Count Batthany, the Field-Marshal, who was Joseph's first tutor, "as a pledge so dear and important to us, has been brought up in great tenderness, it is certain that we have yielded to him too much. . . . His violent desire to carry out his will would result in obedience to him, but not in success."

Batthany was told to curb Joseph's strong will, to make him obedient, kind to his inferiors, and good mannered. The child rarely had a moment to himself. It is not surprising that in his early childhood he was stubborn and reserved. When Joseph was six years old.

Podewils wrote to Frederick of Prussia that "the child would rather be locked up in his room and deprived of his food than apologise to any one."

The child's parents probably did not guess that he might have enjoyed this punishment, which meant solitude. Even a less nervous boy must have rebelled against the constant supervision he was forced to suffer.

"In the evening," Maria Theresa wrote to Joseph's tutor, "you are to leave the Archduke; if necessary, one of the chamberlains is to join him. But you are to remain in the room to observe his manners, his postures, and so forth from a distance. You can then judge his deportment and correct him."

Maria Theresa was equally strict with her daughters, but she did not consider book-learning important for them; no one could ever accuse Maria Theresa of being a feminist in any sense of the word. Though she herself had so firmly put Francis in his place as a mere consort, she clung to her belief that women should be submissive to their husbands. Her daughters were given the least possible education; they were merely trained to become the dutiful wives of some prince or, if they were fortunate, of some ruling monarch.

"You know how strongly I feel on this subject," she wrote years later to her daughter Maria Antoinette when she was already married to the Dauphin of France; "a wife is subject to her husband in everything; she should have no interests or occupations except to please and obey him. A happy marriage is the only real happiness on earth; I can judge that this is true. *Everything* depends on the woman; she must be willing to please, to be gentle and entertaining."

Maria Theresa's antagonism to the higher education of women was reflected in the relatively low standards

of female intelligence in her country. Foreigners from more enlightened countries were often horrified by the ignorance of Austrian women. They were, as one English visitor to Vienna remarked, "elegant, graceful, and pleasing," but they "rarely possess cultivated minds." . . . "The principal reading of women of quality," the visitor writes, "is such as tends to pervert and contract, rather than to enlarge and improve their understanding. Holy legends, lives of female saints, Masses, and homilies constitute their chief information. They know little of Madame de Sévigné, and less of Racine, Molière, or Fontenelle. . . ."

"This want of improvement among women," he continues, "is universal, and the necessary result of women's confined education. They are taught to sing hymns to the Virgin, and to tell their beads devoutly. Of history, poetry, and polite letters they imbibe no tincture. . . ."

The nurseries and schoolrooms of Maria Theresa's sons as well as of her daughters were organised more efficiently than many of the government offices, for her immediate presence was constantly felt by her children's tutors. The children spent the winter in the *Hofburg* in Vienna and the summer in Schönbrunn. Dr. van Swieten was instructed to make a daily round of the children's rooms, and to report the state of their health to the Empress. She has often been praised as a remarkable mother because, despite the cares of government, she gave orders that she was to be called at any time, "during the day or at night," if they were ill.

Whether she saw them or not, her sons and daughters were never for an instant allowed to forget her omnipotent presence. They felt that her invisible eye was constantly watching them, that she knew about every step they took, every bite they ate. "It is my wish," she

commanded, "that the children are to eat everything set before them without making any objections. They are not to make any remarks about preferring this or that, or to discuss their food. They are to eat fish every Friday and Saturday and on every fast-day. Though Johanna has a repulsion against fish, no one is to give way to her in this matter. . . . All my children seem to have an aversion against fish, but they must all overcome this, there is to be no relenting in this matter."

Affairs of State left her little leisure to devote to her children, but she often sat up until late in the night writing letters to their teachers about them. She admonished and occasionally praised them in writing; she was like the most impersonal of severe headmistresses. Innumerable memoranda about the education of the young archdukes and archduchesses have been handed down to us. All of them reflect Maria Theresa's growing attention to details.

Her later instructions to the tutor of Archduchess Josepha, who died in her youth, are typical of the severity of these documents. Josepha, who was a very frail and neurotic child, was only ten years old when her mother wrote the following letter to her governess:

"Only on Sundays is she to join us for church and dinner; she must go out often, and eat only simple food. For supper she is to have soup and one other dish; she must learn Spanish and Italian. She is to rise at seven o'clock; she will then say her morning prayers and read some holy book, after which she is to have breakfast."

From eight to nine the little Archduchess had her writing lesson; three days a week she was given religious instruction from nine to ten. She was taught how to read German and Latin. At eleven she attended Mass,

at twelve she dined. From half-past one until two she was taught history, so that she would have a slight idea of the history of any country where she might later go as a bride. From two to three she studied German grammar. At four o'clock her dancing-master arrived, and, curious idea of her puritanical mother, immediately after her dancing lesson, at five, " she recited her rosary very loudly." Then a short walk, supper, and to bed.

Maria Theresa acknowledged only the existence in her children of some apparent disease like the measles. Nervousness or general weakness were considered by her to be a lack of goodwill.

" I am more convinced than ever," she once wrote to Josepha's governess, Countess Lerchenfeld, " that my daughter is not ill, but that she has bad habits, and these must be uprooted immediately and thoroughly. I have been too gentle with her, I have spoken to her with too much friendship in order to encourage her, but I cannot flatter myself that I can be successful with her until the source of her trouble, her violent temper and her selfishness, have been restrained. When she is even spoken to she becomes so irritated that she is ready to weep in anger."

In the children's strict routine little time was assigned to play or recreation ; it is not surprising that those of Maria Theresa's children, like Marie Antoinette, who survived their harsh youth, went to the opposite extreme and became extremely frivolous when they were older. Their frivolity shocked and surprised their mother ; Maria Theresa was not gifted as a psychologist.

Maria Theresa continued to write long, admonishing memoranda to her children when they were grown up. Nagging, for this is not too strong a word, had become a habit with her. " To my astonishment," she wrote, for

instance, to her daughter Caroline after she had married Ferdinand of Naples, "I have heard from Brandis, from your ladies-in-waiting, and even from strangers, that you say your prayers carelessly, without veneration, attention, or deeper feeling. Don't be surprised if the whole day is bad after such a beginning. Recently you have acquired the habit of being rude to your ladies-in-waiting. . . . You are bad-tempered while they are dressing you; I cannot forget this rudeness in you and I shall never forgive it. . . . Your voice and your speech are unpleasant enough as it is; you must therefore make a special effort to improve in this respect, you must never raise your voice. You are conscientiously to continue your exercises in music, painting, history, geography, and Latin. You must never be lazy, for indolence is dangerous for every one and especially for you. You must occupy your mind, for this will prevent you from thinking of childish pranks, from making unsuitable remarks, and from longing for foolish amusements. . . ."

Maria Theresa had no idea that she was a harsh mother. She prided herself on being a most tolerant and affectionate parent. She would have been deeply hurt had she known that, as Marie Antoinette later confessed, none of Maria Theresa's children ever felt at ease in the frightening and imposing presence of their markable mother.

CHAPTER NINE

MARIA THERESA'S new administration had clearly shown that when, in her opinion, reforms would benefit the empire, she did not hesitate to sweep aside the institutions of the past. The foreign policy she had been contemplating since the Peace of Aix was far more revolutionary than the reorganisation of the internal administration of her country. Her belief never wavered that her hated enemy, Frederick of Prussia, was now Austria's most formidable enemy.

The development of her new foreign policy, her Diplomatic Revolution, as it is called, was largely determined by her antagonism towards him and her bitter regret at the loss of Silesia. In order to defeat Frederick, she was increasingly convinced that the time had come for Austria gradually to win the friendship of France, to overcome the traditional enmity which had separated the Habsburgs and Bourbons for centuries. United they must crush Frederick of Prussia.

When Kaunitz returned from the Netherlands, he was at once appointed as a member of her Conference of Ministers and her Minister for Foreign Affairs. She valued his judgment of domestic as well as foreign affairs, and until her death he was her closest adviser in the government, and her friend. Her dependence on him increased with the years, but she was never in the least dominated by him, as Anne of Russia, for instance, was ruled by her minister, Biron.

Kaunitz, one of the strangest characters in the

eighteenth century, was born in 1711 as a younger son of an old aristocratic family. He was originally trained for the Church, but after the death of his elder brother, he was educated for a diplomatic career. He studied law in Leyden and Leipzig as well as in Vienna, and then travelled in Europe.

He entered the diplomatic service in 1741, and represented Maria Theresa in Rome, Florence, and Turin. He distinguished himself in 1742 when he negotiated Austria's defensive alliance with Sardinia and England against France and Spain. He was promoted to the post of Governor of the Austrian Netherlands under Charles of Lorraine, and he had become well known as a skilful diplomat during the negotiations which led up to the Peace of Aix.

Kaunitz had been odd from his youth. It is known that his mother, a strong almost masculine woman, who was extremely progressive for the age, paid great attention to the education of her daughters. Wenzel Kaunitz, a younger child, and in his childhood a younger son as well, was spoiled and petted by his sisters. His health was delicate; he was ill so much as a boy that in manhood he lived in constant dread of diseases. He once had a glass box made to fit over himself and his saddle when he went out riding, because he was afraid that the fresh air might make him ill. He was always afraid of dying, and no one was allowed to mention the death of any one in his presence. When he was a grown man with a wife and six children of his own, he talked about his health, or rather his ill-health, so frequently that throughout his life—and he lived to be over eighty—he was treated as a semi-invalid; he was unhappy unless he was the centre of attention. Maria Theresa, too, treated him as though he were some fragile and infinitely

precious possession. "The more I grow to appreciate him," she once wrote, "the more I tremble lest he be taken from us."

Though many of Kaunitz's eccentricities were affected, he was by no means an intellectual poseur. As Frederick the Great quite rightly admitted, "his knowledge of political affairs was as profound as his personal tastes were frivolous." He had a brilliant mind, though he often chose to conceal this fact behind some trivial though witty remark. He was extremely secretive, and as Sir Robert Keith wrote to Lord Carmarthen, "Kaunitz has no confidants nor even intimates, and therefore his designs are impenetrable."

Whether people understood Kaunitz's intentions or not, they had to admit that he had a profound knowledge of many subjects. He was an expert not only in foreign affairs, but had great knowledge, and an intuitive flair for domestic politics as well. He loved art and literature, but at the same time he knew enough about economics to stimulate the development of Austria's silk and porcelain industries.

"He was tall," we are told, "well-made, muscular, of rather a lithe figure. His complexion was milk-white, his hair blonde, his eyes blue; and though ordinarily of a calm expression, yet now and then flashing with the keen glance of an eagle. His brow was a little arched, his nose aquiline, his chin somewhat prominent, his mouth delicately formed and rather small. Kaunitz used to wear a remarkable tie-wig with a profusion of curls, which, to cover every wrinkle in his forehead, ran across it in a zigzag line. He seems to have been the inventor of the art of powdering (practised also by the famous Prince de Ligne), and he used to walk to and fro through a double line of servants, each

of whom had a different shade of hair powder, white, blue, yellow, and pink, to throw on his wig, which, after these combined operations, exhibited what was considered to be the perfection of evenness and colour. With the Spanish costume, Kaunitz wore white (instead of red) stockings, and made his appearance with a bag to his wig and with a large muff. Although he had been told to comply with the existing customs, he would not always do so. He was everywhere, except at Court, accompanied by a large bull-dog. He was always dressed in good taste, and on particular occasions with magnificence, but never gorgeously, nor did he ever wear embroidery. During the whole of his life he paid particular attention to his toilet."

Many of Kaunitz's contemporaries were irritated because he was so "finical about his dress," and he made many enemies, because he was "coldly and affectedly polite." At the international conferences which he attended as Maria Theresa's representative early in his career, his adversaries were sometimes lulled into a false sense of security when they met this obviously vain and self-centred man. When they knew him better, his opponents felt less confident, for despite his "inordinate self-love, his exaggerated consciousness of his superior abilities and influence," despite the fact that he was "opinionated, presumptuous, and overbearing," he had, as William Coxe does him justice by saying, "a perspicuous method of transacting business, and explaining the most complicated affairs, an accurate knowledge of the state of Europe, and an indefatigable zeal for the service of his Imperial mistress. To these qualities were added incorruptible integrity, skill in negotiation, impenetrable secrecy, profound dissimulation, which he carried even to duplicity, and a semblance

of candour and openness by which he acquired the confidence of those with whom he treated, even while deceiving or opposing them."

Maria Theresa was never for an instant prejudiced against Kaunitz because of his affectations. With her rare instinct for detecting the abilities of men who might be useful to her and the State, she realised after the Peace of Aix that he was the one man in her service who could help her to improve Austria's foreign relations. Impatient as she was with the eccentricities of others, hot tempered as she could still be when any one opposed her, she was always infinitely tactful with Kaunitz. She was constantly careful of his feelings; she flattered his vanity enough and yet never so much that he could guess that she knew how vain he was; she never forgot to ask about his health or to listen to the descriptions of his ailments.

Six months after the Peace of Aix, Maria Theresa called together her Conference of Ministers to discuss foreign affairs. Each member of the Conference, as well as Francis, who was always invited to attend, was instructed to prepare for her a memorandum stating his views on the foreign policies to be adopted by Austria in the future. She had presided at so many meetings of her ministers, had so often heard them talk for hours without getting to the point, that now, schoolmistress that she was becoming in her attitude towards those about her, she demanded their opinions in writing. She hated loose thinking, and she tried to make her ministers formulate their ideas clearly.

The memoranda she received from Francis and from all of her ministers except Kaunitz agreed on the main issues. Though they resented the harsh diplomatic pressure exerted by England on Austria during the war,

they did not recommend any change in the existing system of alliances.

Kaunitz, as she had expected, disagreed with the others fundamentally. In clear and concise language, he argued that as Frederick of Prussia was now Austria's most dangerous enemy, her existing alliances had become unimportant as compared with the urgent necessity " of weakening him and of curtailing his power." " With God's help," Kaunitz wrote, " we will bring so many enemies on the back of the insolent King of Prussia that he must succumb."

To this end, obviously, new alliances were necessary, and, so Kaunitz firmly believed, the most necessary among these new allies was France.

Kaunitz never denied, as Maria Theresa's other ministers had pointed out, that logically the Maritime Powers, Russia, and Saxony should be Austria's allies, and that Prussia, France, and Turkey were her natural enemies. Kaunitz emphasised, however, that experience in the past had shown how little and what grudging support could be expected from these natural allies; the aims of England and Holland were not the aims of Austria. Russia was undependable, and Saxony was not strong enough to participate in a war. Turkey was always a danger to Austria, and she should be constantly watched.

Kaunitz admitted that France's attitude during the entire war—the manner in which she had taken advantage of the Empress's youth and inexperience, Fleury's double dealing, the traditional enmity between the Bourbons and the Habsburgs, France's support of Frederick of Prussia—proved that France had indeed been Austria's worst enemy. Despite this fact, however, so Kaunitz repeated again and again in his memorandum,

France, this "natural enemy," must gradually be won as an ally and a friend; France's alliance with Prussia must be brought to an end. Only thus, when Frederick was weakened, would Austria be safe from his attacks.

Though Kaunitz was temperamental, he was as realistic in his political views as he was fantastic in his personal habits. He was fully aware that self-interest is the basis of all politics, and that France would not consider an Austrian alliance unless she would derive very real benefits from it. He suggested in his report that eventually some territorial advantages might be ceded to France in return for her support.

Kaunitz hoped that Maria Theresa would adopt his francophil policy soon, for, since the Peace of Dresden, the French Government had been somewhat suspicious of Frederick, and France might be receptive to anti-Prussian propaganda—if this propaganda were discreetly administered. Kaunitz was, of course, fully aware of the slow progress of diplomatic changes; he never for an instant overlooked the fact that it would be disastrous for Austria were her intentions regarding France to become known too soon. The Maritime Powers, still Austria's official allies, would have been irrevocably antagonised, and Austria might have been left without her old allies before she had successfully concluded any arrangements with France.

With Maria Theresa's assistance, Kaunitz finally persuaded the Conference of Ministers—this was in 1749—to accept his proposals for a change in Austria's system of alliances. Only one of the Ministers, Count Colloredo, the Vice-Chancellor, remained permanently hostile to Kaunitz's plan.

In all of her discussions with Kaunitz, the Empress emphasised the need of proceeding with the utmost

caution; outwardly the old alliances were to be maintained and strengthened. The consistency of her efforts at this time to proceed carefully is illustrated by the fact that, late in 1749, England first suggested the election of Archduke Joseph, who was then ten years old, as the King of the Romans and that the united efforts of France and Prussia prevented his election. France was still her official enemy, still the ally of Prussia.

The diplomatic relations between France and Austria had been resumed after the Peace of Aix, but Mareschal, Maria Theresa's first envoy to France after the war, had been very coolly received in Versailles. He was not granted a private audience with the King, and when he attended Court functions to which the foreign Ambassador from every "friendly" power had to be invited, he was ignored and made to feel very uncomfortable. The Marquis de Puysieux, Louis XV.'s foreign minister, received him with frigid aloofness. Monsieur Blondel, the French Chargé d'affaires, who came to Vienna after the war, on the other hand, was shown every possible courtesy by Maria Theresa and her Court. Cautious as she usually was in her preparations for the future alliance with France, she was delightfully indiscreet in the marked attention she paid Louis XV.'s Ambassador. Blondel was asked to attend the most intimate dinner parties at the *Hofburg*, gatherings to which, as a rule, only the ministers representing her allies, the Maritime Powers, or the Pope, were invited. It was also rumoured that in her private conversations with Blondel, the Empress did not hesitate to tell him frankly what she thought about her ally, England, or her arch-enemy Frederick of Prussia.

As a rule she was always so wary of what she said,

so careful in her diplomatic relations, that on rare occasions, such as the reception she gave Blondel in Vienna, one feels that she had let herself go, and said what she really thought. These rare inconsistencies in her political career, which show that despite her rigid self-discipline she had remained human, exasperated her political advisers. Kaunitz was particularly perturbed when he was told that she had spoken slightingly of Frederick to Monsieur Blondel, for, inevitably, Frederick would soon learn what she had said in her rash moments.

Kaunitz wrote a tactful letter to Koch, Maria Theresa's chief private secretary, reminding him, and thus the Empress, that "the King of Prussia is an ally of France, and that Austria is not." Frederick, so Kaunitz continued, "is still one of France's most influential allies. France would be in a very weak position without his powerful support. Naturally France cares more for Frederick than she does for us."

It was soon obvious to Kaunitz that the Empress's indiscretions at home, and Mareschal's failure in Versailles, made it impossible for friendly feelings for Austria to mature in France. Kaunitz felt that he himself was needed in France, and in October 1750, therefore, he persuaded Maria Theresa to send him to Versailles as her Minister Plenipotentiary.

Kaunitz was received by the Marquis de Puysieux, by the King, and by Madame de Pompadour, but he soon realised that "many changes would have to occur before we can even begin to hope to break off the alliance between France and Prussia."

It has often been stated in this connection that despite her harsh disapproval of illicit love affairs at home, Maria Theresa had at this time already learned to overlook such immorality abroad, and that to facilitate

Kaunitz's negotiations in Paris she wrote "cousinly" and "affectionate" letters to Madame de Pompadour. Frederick of Prussia publicly announced that his spies had intercepted some of these letters. In September 1758, in fact, he had published a "Lettre de la Marquise de Pompadour à la reine de Hongrie."

It is true that, with Maria Theresa's grudging consent, Kaunitz in 1756 sent the Marquise a portrait of the Empress (in a frame valued at 80,000 livres), and that Madame de Pompadour wrote to thank Maria Theresa for this gift. As a matter of fact, Kaunitz wrote to Starhemberg, who had forwarded the Marquise's note in the diplomatic pouch, that "it might be extremely awkward for him when the Empress read this letter." For to further his diplomatic ends, Kaunitz had written rather frequently to Madame de Pompadour after his return to Vienna, and his letters had been full of imaginary messages from the Empress, messages which she herself had never sent. "The Empress was touched, Madame," Kaunitz on one occasion wrote to the Marquise, "by the interest you continue to show for her future alliance with the King of France."

Frederick of Prussia's contention that Maria Theresa herself wrote to the Marquis is most probably untrue. Apart from Madame de Pompadour's note of thanks, no correspondence between these two so different women has been handed down to us, and it can be safely assumed that no such correspondence ever existed. As yet, even for political reasons, Maria Theresa, whose puritanism, and whose personal jealousy of her husband's mistresses were at their height, would not have condescended to ask favours of a woman whom she considered outside the pale of decent moral society. Already, however, she was astute enough as a politician to have developed the

hypocrisy so necessary for a statesman, and her conscience was not troubled by Kaunitz's letters to the Pompadour. Later, when she urged her daughter Marie Antoinette to be tactful with Madame du Barry, the Empress had mastered the political art of compromising between her private and her political conscience.

Maria Theresa herself categorically denied ever having written to Madame de Pompadour, and the Empress was never a liar. In October 1763, when she had heard the tales spread by Frederick about her alleged correspondence with Madame de Pompadour, Maria Theresa wrote to her aunt, the Electress Maria Antonia of Saxony:

"You are much mistaken if you believe that I have ever had any dealings with the Pompadour. She has not even been the intermediary of a letter (to the King of France) from me or from my ministers. My emissary had to pay court to her, like other people, but there has never been the slightest intimacy."

Perhaps, had Maria Theresa written to Madame de Pompadour, Kaunitz's task would have been easier. As it was, his reports in 1750 and early in 1751 reflect his increasing depression. At times he felt that he would never succeed in winning the active support of France for Austria. His anxieties made him ill, or made him think that he was ill, for throughout his life he tried to escape from difficult situations into some illness. Maria Theresa, who did not understand him well enough to realise that, if properly handled, he overcame these moods of ill-health and despair, was greatly worried. "Everything will be over, if he is taken ill again," she wrote despondently.

She was profoundly agitated when, during the summer of 1751, Kaunitz's hopelessness caused him,

temporarily, to suggest abandoning his scheme for a Franco-Austrian alliance. "Under existing circumstances," he wrote in a memorandum to the Empress in May, "what reasonable means is left of securing our own safety, except entirely to forget the loss of Silesia, to remove all cause of jealousy from the King of Prussia in this regard, and thus to bring him to a general alliance with Austria and the Maritime Powers."

Maria Theresa did not answer this memorandum for many weeks. She had no intention of giving up her plans for an alliance with France, but she was beginning to understand Kaunitz and to know that he was best left alone until his depression had passed. Koch, whom an English contemporary called "not very capable, but a man of great integrity," urged the Empress to answer Kaunitz's memorandum, but she assured Koch that "Kaunitz needed no instructions," he would do as circumstances in Paris demanded and she trusted him.

Finally, but not until November, she replied to Kaunitz's memorandum. As she had thought over his sudden disinterest in a friendship with France, she became annoyed with the Count, but she never allowed herself to lose her temper with him. She calmly instructed Koch what he was to write to Kaunitz. "Tell the Count," she said, "that he knows my intentions better than any one else knows them. He knows that I am not fond of France, but that nothing would be more difficult for me than to consent to an arrangement with the King of Prussia, as he suggests at the close of his report. This would mean that I would for all time give up the idea of reconquering Silesia. Neither ambition nor love of conquest prompt me to wish to regain this Province, but I am increasingly convinced that the well-being of my Family depends upon regaining Silesia. I

believe that the loss of this Province is the source of all the dilemmas we are suffering. I do not flatter myself that Silesia will be reconquered during my lifetime, and no one desires the continuation of peace more fervently than I do, but if I accepted the system of alliances which Kaunitz now suggests, I should make it impossible for my successors ever to regain this Province."

Kaunitz, who loved Paris and everything French, and who was feeling more cheerful, answered the Empress's letter almost immediately. In his answer, dated December 5, 1751, he assured her that "nothing was farther from his mind than urging an alliance with Prussia." He had, so he now said, "only wanted her to understand the arguments with which he himself had to be familiar in his dealings with the French Court."

Though the situation was unchanged, Kaunitz's new optimism was partly based on Madame de Pompadour's growing interest in him. "I do not know how it happened," Kaunitz wrote, "but somehow or other it is true that the King and Madame de Pompadour and their circle are greatly attached to me. All this is no doubt outside real business, but personal affections of this kind are never harmful, and upon occasion they may prove of the greatest importance."

Maria Theresa did not quite share Kaunitz's new assurance. Her belief that ultimately France and her country would be united by an alliance was not shaken, but she realised that it would take a very long time to bring about such a union. Towards the end of 1752, she decided to recall Kaunitz to Vienna. Francis, who had spoken of the *rapprochement* with France as "an unnatural alliance which is impracticable and must never take place," was stubbornly, though as a rule silently, opposing her plans. She needed some one with

whom she could discuss her problems, whom she could take fully into her confidence.

Koch records that the Conference of her ministers had bored her since Kaunitz left for Paris; she grew sleepy whenever she was forced to listen to the long dull reports of her other ministers. She herself said that she breathed a sigh of relief when she read any of Kaunitz's memoranda. "I prefer his unstable mind," Koch records that she once said to him; "he is dearer and more necessary to me than the others who are so strong and so perfect. I admit that since December" —this was written in March—"I have not been as stimulated as I was to-day after reading his report, but I am worried about his health. He must take care of himself, his catarrh causes me anxiety."

Kaunitz left Paris early in 1753. Count Starhemberg succeeded him as Austrian Ambassador in Paris, and on his return to Vienna, Kaunitz was appointed as State Chancellor. The Empress had prepared the way for him. Unfeld, who had been the Chancellor for years, became Lord Steward. To compensate him for this relatively humble post she also gave him an income of 45,000 gulden, bought him a house, and paid off his debts, which amounted to 160,000 gulden. Kaunitz finally consented to accept the State Chancellorship, but he was not at all eager for this honour. He did not like regular work in a chancellory. Besides, he was in a *prima donna* mood when he returned from Paris; and he agreed to take office only if the Chancellor's department was completely reorganised, and if Bartenstein was dismissed. Kaunitz, an inveterate snob, could not bear this overbearing self-made man. Also, and in this he was justified, he seriously objected to the rude tone of Bartenstein's dispatches to foreign courts.

Maria Theresa was glad to change the old-fashioned administrative system prevailing in the Chancellor's office, but she shrank from removing Bartenstein from his post as secretary to the Conference. She knew, however, that Kaunitz meant what he said. He was in a mood when he did not care whether he was Chancellor or not, he was like a stubborn child, and if he did not get what he wanted, he might retire to his estates in the country. So Bartenstein was finally appointed to a nominal position, that of Vice-Chancellor of her *Directorium*, the central office dealing with the affairs of the various countries in the Empire, and Kaunitz became the Chancellor.

Kaunitz continued to fret, he emphasised that his appointment was to be a temporary one. If he should suddenly weary of his new responsibilities, if he should be taken ill, he wanted to feel free to leave his post at once at any time. It was typical of him that after all this fuss he remained in office, under her and her sons, for almost forty years.

Shortly after his return to Austria, Kaunitz was also appointed to a non-political post. Maria Theresa chose him as the chairman of the Chastity Commission, the *Keuschheits-Kommission*, which she founded in 1753. Her puritanism had now found a concrete expression. For a long time she had been outraged by what she considered the low standards of sexual morality of many of her subjects, and she was determined to improve these conditions. She had no sense of humour whatsoever about morality; it did not strike her in the least odd that Kaunitz who, so she must have known, was very fond of women, should help her persecute men and women who were not joined together in holy wedlock.

The Empress's Chastity Commission functioned in close co-operation with the police. A number of regular police were assigned to the supervision of morality in Vienna and elsewhere in Austria, and the Commission also employed secret agents to investigate the private lives of men and women whose reputation did not please Maria Theresa. These agents walked the streets of Vienna at night in search of immorality, and the Empress gave orders that they were to enter private houses whenever this seemed necessary in their search for culprits.

"There was plenty of money and plenty of luxury in Vienna," Casanova mentions in his *Mémoires*, "but the bigotry of the Empress made Cytherean pleasures extremely difficult, especially for strangers."

Maria Theresa's "legion of vile spies," who "were the pitiless tormentors of all girls," made life for gay foreigners extremely dangerous or very dull in Vienna.

"It is hardly possible," Wraxall records in this connection, "to conceive how minute and circumstantial a detail her inquiries embrace relative to the private conduct of her subjects of both sexes; their actions, amusements, and pleasures, even the most concealed, are constantly reported to her. She employs emissaries or spies, who omit nothing for her information. I could relate from my own personal knowledge some curious and entertaining instances of her inspection into the conduct of the ladies of her Court; but the subject is too delicate for particular details. An illiberal superstition, rather than a rational disapproval of gallantry, on account of the private and political ills which it produces, actuate her in this rigorous proscription. . . . The presence of the Empress, and the terror inspired by her vigilance, as well as her resentment, operate in repressing all excesses. Superstition, confessors, and

penances add weight to temporal motives. But the principle of frailty nevertheless exists; even Vienna has its Messalinas, though certainly in smaller number and marked with fainter colours than elsewhere."

When Maria Theresa became suspicious of any of her courtiers, she instructed her little army to make an investigation. "Spies," so Wraxall reports, "form a numerous, expensive, and very obnoxious branch of the State police. No place is free from their intrusion or exempt from their inquiries. At the theatre, at the Ridottos, and at all public entertainments, there are some of them posted . . . to prevent the smallest appearance of immodesty or licentiousness. The commissaries report to the Empress every fact worthy her notice, and many which are by no means of a nature to deserve her attention or interference."

As soon as Maria Theresa's spies had reported any symptom of immorality to her, she took the matter up at once. "I have heard," she once wrote to the Commission, "that a certain Palm has persuaded a virtuous dancer of the *Deutsches Theater* to live with him. By lying to her and making false promises, he has persuaded her to live with him as though she were his wife. Investigate this matter and verify the facts. This Palm's hypocrisy is criminal, as is the conduct of the young woman."

On another occasion, Maria Theresa wrote to Kaunitz, as the chairman of the Commission, asking him to arrange the deportation of a Count Schulenberg who was living in sin with a young Countess Esterhazy. The Empress discussed sending the guilty young woman to a convent for life to atone for her sin. Maria Theresa was furious when the young couple succeeded in escaping to Zürich; she considered having the Count beheaded in effigy, but

Kaunitz dissuaded her from making herself and the Chastity Commission quite so ridiculous.

Immorality was, of course, made more interesting and more exciting when Maria Theresa began to be actively concerned with the morals of her countrymen and women. The public was extremely interested in the activities of her morality policemen, and good citizens, who led dull and exemplary lives, listened eagerly to the gossip about the sinners who had been caught.

Immorality became popular, and men and women courageous enough to live as they chose ran the risk of serious punishments, and their sinfulness seemed heroic to simple citizens. Secret organisations, the names of which indicate the predilections of their members, were founded. Many members of the aristocracy joined these clubs under assumed pseudonyms. The *Feigenbrüderschaft*, the Fig Leaf Brotherhood, and the *Freidamenorden*, the Order of Free Ladies, were the best known.

Once when, after a raid by the police, members of the Fig Leaf Brotherhood were caught, Maria Theresa ordered them to be posted, manacled, at the gates of Vienna, where they would, so she hoped, be jeered at by the population. They were to be dependent on the food which pitying passers-by would give them. Her severe measures were not, however, a success, for the public obviously felt more pity than contempt for these prisoners, who were given plenty of food and a great deal of sympathy. Maria Theresa never inflicted this form of punishment again on any of the culprits caught by her agents.

If Maria Theresa's sometimes ridiculous and always cruel persecution of immorality was indeed her reaction to Francis's unfaithfulness, and she hoped to reform him as well as her subjects, her efforts were not a success.

Two years after the Chastity Commission was founded, in 1755, he formed a serious and lasting attachment to Princess Wilhelmine Auersperg. Princess Auersperg, a daughter of General Neipperg, was seventeen years old when her father brought her to Vienna and married her to Prince Auersperg. Francis, who was forty-six, was completely carried off his feet when he met her. "I saw the lovely Princess Auersperg," Lady Mary Wortley Montagu writes: "The Emperor makes no secret of his passion for her."

Contemporaries agree that "la belle Auersperg" was extremely beautiful; she was of "middle size," had *lovely grey eyes, and "glossy luxuriant brown hair."* "No description can convey an adequate idea of her attractions." Maria Theresa herself always bitterly referred to her as "la belle Auersperg." The Princess had many admirers. As "she seldom remained long constant in her preference," she was by no means faithful to Francis, but he was devoted to her to the end of his life.

Sir Nathaniel Wraxall heard a great deal about Princess Auersperg when he came to Vienna in 1777, two years after her death. "Francis was not the less permanently attached to her" despite her unfaithfulness, Wraxall says. "In her society, and that of a select company of both sexes, he used to pass many of his evenings. A supper of ten or twelve covers was provided where the Princess presided, and from which all forms of etiquette were banished. In public, whether at the theatre, or elsewhere, Francis observed towards the Empress every mark of deference and attention, but when she was not present at the performance, he always repaired to the Princess's box. At the opera he usually stood behind her, concealed from view; and the box was locked, in order to prevent intrusion. Notwith-

standing these precautions, a cough to which he was subject generally betrayed his retreat, and divulged the secret to the world."

Respectful Austrian historians, who describe Maria Theresa's and Francis's union as an ideal and consistently happy marriage, try to gloss over his attachment to the Princess Auersperg. There is no question, however, but that Maria Theresa was never really happy in her marriage after this liaison began. Francis was consistently considerate of his wife, he never neglected her, several of their children were born after he met Princess Auersperg, but he was often away from home. He bought the Princess a country home near his hunting lodge at Laxenburg, and Maria Theresa was frequently enraged when her husband left Vienna for days at a time. On one occasion, when Francis had just returned from a visit to the royal hunting lodge, he wanted for some reason to return to Laxenburg almost at once. Maria Theresa absolutely refused to allow it. According to Khevenhüller, who reports this little scene, she angrily reminded Francis that she "rarely refused his requests" to go to Laxenburg, and that she was "usually too obliging" when he asked her whether he might go.

After such an outburst of anger, Maria Theresa was miserably ashamed of her lack of self-control. Then, for weeks at a time, hoping to hide her unhappiness, her wounded pride from her Court, she would pretend that the Princess Auersperg was merely a friend of the family. The Princess would be asked frequently to dine with the Imperial family, and Maria Theresa calmly wrote to one or the other of her absent children that "Francis sat between her daughter Elisabeth and Princess Auersperg at the table."

The friction between Maria Theresa and Francis

caused by the Princess Auersperg was always keenly felt by their children. Isabella of Parma, who married Archduke Joseph in 1760, was much embarrassed by this situation when she became a member of Maria Theresa's household. In common with every one else, she "responded to Francis's frank friendliness," but she dared not show him too much affection, lest the Empress think that she was favouring Princess Auersperg. Archduchess Isabella had soon appreciated the fact that Francis "consulted the Princess about many things which were not her business to know, and that the Empress was in a constant state of agitation over this affair."

Archduchess Maria Christine, Maria Theresa's second daughter, who later married Prince Albert of Saxe-Teschen, wrote to her sister-in-law Isabella: "The Emperor is a very good father, we can always count on his devotion, and we must therefore protect him against himself. I am referring to his relations with Princess Auersperg. Perhaps you don't realise what a great influence this woman has on him. He has absolute faith in her, and he hides nothing from her. The Empress is extremely jealous of this attachment."

Though Maria Theresa's family knew that she was unhappy, and her friends and courtiers must have guessed it, she never for an instant allowed her personal distress to interfere with her work. She never remained away from a conference of her ministers, even if by doing so she might have prevented Francis from joining the Princess Auersperg. Maria Theresa had long before chosen between Francis and her country, and even if, by devoting more time to him and less to affairs of State, she might have made him give up the Princess, she could never have done so. Her country came first, whatever suffering this choice implied.

CHAPTER TEN

THE international complications which finally led up to the Seven Years War were a maze of diplomatic negotiations, secret reports, "defensive" alliances, which were obviously intended to become offensive in the extreme, watchful waiting and national ambition. European nations, busily preparing for their own aggrandisement, and really concerned with nothing but their own selfish interests, were assuring each other of their own trustworthiness, their noble intentions to safeguard at all costs the peace of Europe.

Two outstanding events which occurred during the decade before the Seven Years War had thoroughly dislocated the balance of power. The first was the ascendancy of Prussia on the European continent, and the second was the conflict between France and England for supremacy in America. It was obvious that these new factors in the political scene would eventually result in an armed struggle in Europe. The two chief nations involved in this coming war, France and England, were strengthening their sea power and sending their armies to America, and this made them less ready for a war at home.

At the time, England controlled the West Indian Islands and Jamaica, but on the American continent she was in possession only of the narrow strip of land between the Alleghany Mountains and the Atlantic. The French dominated Canada, but they hoped to occupy Ohio and the Mississippi valley as well, for these

districts would connect their Louisiana Colony in the South with their Canadian dominions.

The American War between France and England was not officially begun until 1756, but their differences became critical several years before when some enterprising English settlers moved from their homes in Virginia and Pennsylvania and established a new settlement in the Ohio valley. Duquesne, the French Governor of Canada, drove them back. Then followed a period of attacks and counter-attacks, of skirmishes and battles, until war was finally declared.

For the English the situation was extremely critical, and George II. realised that the majority of the country's armed strength would be needed in America. He therefore considered that the time had come to ask Maria Theresa to return the many favours he had shown her during the War of the Austrian Succession. The English either ignored, or chose to forget, the humiliations they had inflicted on her during the last war, and the tone of the British correspondence with Austria, still, of course, officially England's ally, was distinctly peremptory.

George II. demanded two services from the Empress: she was to send troops to the Netherlands to protect them against a probable French invasion, and she was to guarantee that she would defend his Electorate of Hanover if it were attacked by France or Prussia while his armies were fighting in America.

Maria Theresa was enraged by George II.'s attitude. She never overcame her dislike of the English. "Almost all the English," she once wrote years later to her son Joseph, "are deists, infidels, and free-thinkers. I tremble lest intercourse with such a nation should shake your belief in everything sacred to Catholics."

She considered George II.'s offer typically English

The stipulations of the Barrier Treaty had been rankling in her mind for many years. This Treaty had made it possible for her allies to restrict the commercial freedom of her Netherland subjects, who had to pay taxes to maintain the troops in the Netherlands by the Maritime Powers. Maria Theresa had annoyed England by passing new tariff laws in the Netherlands which had given her subjects commercial equality with England and Holland. The barrier towns had already been the cause of a serious diplomatic conflict, and when George simply took it for granted that she would do as he wished and send more troops to the Netherlands, Maria Theresa lost her temper more violently than she had done for years.

Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, who went to Vienna to negotiate with her, was told how angry England's demands had made her. She was so furious that her voice could be heard in the next room. Williams wrote to the Duke of Newcastle that the Empress had shouted: "Am I not a sovereign in the Low Countries; and is it not my duty to protect my subjects, who have been too long oppressed by the Barrier Treaty, and deprived of the advantages which all other nations enjoy?"

Perhaps her extreme agitation was partly due to the fact that she was again pregnant, and the first three months of this condition were very trying for her. It is a curious coincidence that, just at this time when her new friendship with France, and her antagonism for England, were maturing, she was carrying the child who was later to be sacrificed to the Habsburg-Bourbon alliance. Marie Antoinette was born on November 2, 1755.

Maria Theresa firmly instructed Kaunitz to reject George II.'s proposals. Kaunitz's answer to England, dated April 16, 1755, was more severe than it was diplo-

matic. It is obvious that a man of Kaunitz's skill was never unintentionally rude. It is probably true, as many historians claim, that he believed the time for an open breach with England had come, and that, through this memorandum, he wished to hasten developments. In the Empress's name he refused to protect Hanover in case of attacks, and he boldly announced that under no circumstances would Austria send more than ten thousand men to the Low Countries.

"England," Kaunitz declared in this memorandum, "has always treated the Low Countries as though she owned them. For over forty years the voice of righteousness had been hushed so that the Maritime Powers could wring their own advantage out of the miserable provinces. Now, however, as soon as danger is imminent, the Maritime Powers call on the Empress for help. She has done her duty. She has suggested leaving the defence of the Low Countries entirely in the hands of the Maritime Powers; she has placed her standing troops in the Provinces at their disposal. In response, Holland has withdrawn her troops from the Barrier Towns, and is considering remaining neutral in the coming conflict. England is trying to make Holland assume the entire burden of defence in the Low Countries." The Empress, Kaunitz concluded, had sufficient strength of character to reject any such proposals.

England's reply, written by Lord Holderness, then Secretary of State, and sent to Keith, British Ambassador in Vienna, reflects that the breach between the two allies was indeed reaching a climax.

"Should the Empress decline to fulfil the conditions required," Holderness wrote, "the King cannot take any measures in concert with the House of Austria, and the whole system of Europe must be dissolved."

There was a further exchange of highly antagonistic diplomatic notes, and Maria Theresa obviously agreed with Kaunitz that the moment had come to force the issue and join France. "She on her part," as Coxe writes, "saw France preparing to invade the Low Countries; Frederick capable of penetrating into Bohemia and the head of 100,000 men, the German Empire divided into parties, and principally governed by the Protestants, excited and supported by the Court of Berlin; the Protestant states powerfully armed, and the Catholics without troops or money. She saw Spain disposed to neutrality; the king of Sardinia jealous and disgusted; Sweden and Denmark devoted to France; the Turks at variance with Russia, and secretly excited by French and Prussian emissaries; Holland irritated and despondent; England incapable of protecting the Low Countries, and alarmed for the Electorate of Hanover. Under these circumstances many evident advantages concurred to recommend the alliance with the Court of Versailles."

George II. heard disquieting rumours about Maria Theresa's intention, and he was beginning to be extremely anxious about Hanover. He therefore turned to Frederick of Prussia for help.

Frederick was open-minded about his uncle George's suggestions for a defensive alliance between Prussia and England. For Frederick had been increasingly irritated by France's haughty attitude towards himself, by Madame de Pompadour's influence. He did not see "why a King of Prussia should be obliged to consider a demoiselle Poisson at all, especially as she was arrogant and lacking in the respect she owed crowned heads."

Apart from his annoyance with France, Frederick realised that he might need England's support for other

reasons. He had heard about the secret treaty concluded several years before by Maria Theresa and Elisabeth of Russia. He was aware that Elisabeth would be quite willing to help Maria Theresa reconquer Silesia, if she, in turn, had a chance of adding East Prussia to Russia.

Frederick and Elisabeth had not always been enemies; he had provided her heir, Peter, with his German wife, Catherine of Zerbst; he had frankly approved the banishment of her rival, the infant pretender Ivan VI. But Frederick bitterly antagonised Elisabeth, as he did so many potential political friends, by his sharp tongue. As Macaulay says: "His bitter and scoffing speech had inflicted keener wounds than his ambition." Elisabeth of Russia resented his remarks about her fondness for vodka and for many lovers, and her hatred of him was fostered by her Chancellor, Bestusheff-Rjumin, who had always distrusted Frederick even when he played the flute.

Late in 1755, Frederick's secret agents informed him that Maria Theresa was flirting with France, but he could not believe that the traditional enmity between the Bourbons and the Habsburgs would ever be overcome. It seemed safer, however, not to risk losing England's offer of mutual assistance, and on January 16, 1756, Frederick concluded a secret defensive treaty with England in which he pledged himself to secure the neutrality of Germany and to defend Hanover in case France tried to invade the Electorate. England, in turn, agreed to defend Prussia against Russia if this became necessary. This Treaty is known as the Treaty of Westminster.

George II. then sent Sir Charles Hanbury Williams to Russia to win Elisabeth's support. She had not heard about the Westminster Treaty, and she assumed that George would be fighting against France and Prussia,

for Frederick was, of course, France's official ally. Elisabeth, therefore, received Hanbury Williams most cordially. In September, however, when the Treaty of Westminster became generally known, she angrily refused to negotiate further with England, turned abruptly to Maria Theresa, and suggested a renewal of their old treaty.

France, in the meantime, was assembling troops in Normandy and Brittany and preparing to invade England. Holland had actually refused to help George II. and had promised France that she would remain neutral. The weakness of England's position caused Maria Theresa to be more hopeful. Apart from the fact that she could now count on Russia, she had signed an alliance with Augustus III. of Poland and Saxony, for Bruehl, his Chancellor, was one of the many statesmen in Europe who had been infuriated by some of the clever remarks made by Frederick at his expense. Bruehl eagerly accepted this opportunity of influencing Augustus against Frederick, and Saxony became Maria Theresa's ally.

As Austria's international relations were being strengthened, France was more willing to negotiate with Maria Theresa. Starhemberg was instructed to bring matters to a head. Louis XV., who loved secrecy and frequently carried on important negotiations behind the backs of his ministers, accepted Madame de Pompadour's suggestion that the Abbé de Bernis was to receive Starhemberg. The Marquise, the Abbé, and Starhemberg met at La Babiole, the country house of Madame de Pompadour's estate. Although some progress was made at this meeting, Madame de Pompadour promised nothing beyond a treaty of neutrality. Negotiations were extremely slow. The Treaty of Westminster was not known for many months, and the French still considered Frederick one of their chief allies. The Treaty

of Versailles, the offensive agreement which finally united Austria and France, was not signed until May 1, 1756. Later, Madame de Pompadour persuaded Louis XV. to give Maria Theresa an annual subsidy of 12,000,000 imperial florins and an army of 105,000 men.

Despite these obvious benefits, Maria Theresa knew that Francis and her ministers were as antagonistic as ever towards an alliance with France. She had, therefore, kept her negotiations with France a secret from Francis as well as from her advisers. She no longer discussed her important political problems with him. She had not only ceased to ask his advice; she did not even wish to be disturbed unnecessarily by his arguments. Her jealousy of the Princess Auersperg made her constantly aware that she would never overcome her personal attachment to Francis, but politically she ignored him. In public she treated him with the utmost courtesy, but undoubtedly Francis was fully aware of her attitude towards him.

Any one meeting the Emperor when he was middle-aged would hardly have believed that he was once an ambitious youth, a young man who was willing to give up his own country for the sake of these ambitions. As he grew older, in fact, he derived an almost perverse pleasure from emphasising his subordinate position at the Court. Bentinck, the Dutch Ambassador to Vienna, always found Francis in a quiet corner of the room, outside the Empress's circle, when he went to Schönbrunn. And in her memoirs, the Countess Harrach records the Emperor's good-natured modesty at one of Maria Theresa's levées.

"He retired from the circle and seated himself in a distant corner of the apartment," Countess Harrach writes. "He sat down near two ladies of the Court.

On their attempting to rise, he said: 'Do not regard me, for I shall stay here till the Court is gone, and then amuse myself by contemplating the crowd!' The ladies replied: 'As long as your Imperial Majesty is present, the Court will be here.'—'You mistake,' the Emperor answered with a smile, 'the Empress and my children are the Court; I am only a simple individual.'"

One of the last occasions on which Francis is known to have made an effort to assert himself was in connection with Austria's alliance with France. When the treaty was ready to be signed, and Maria Theresa could no longer avoid discussing it with her Conference of Ministers and her husband, she pretended that Kaunitz had arranged this alliance with France. "The Empress," we are told, "who was unwilling to shock the prejudices of her consort, or to stem the opposition of her own ministers, affected ignorance of the whole transaction."

When Kaunitz informed the Conference that the Empress was about to sign a treaty with France, Francis reasserted himself once more and struck the table in a rare outburst of anger. The ministers, too, were furious. It was extremely useful to Maria Theresa on this critical occasion that she had firmly established herself as a despot, that she had centralised the power of Austria in her own person, for otherwise her ministers might have opposed her. Her royal authority remained unquestioned, but her private life was made unbearable for several weeks. Francis sulked, and many of her courtiers who had never overcome their traditional hatred of the Bourbons, a hatred they had inherited from their fathers and grandfathers, were outraged. Even young Joseph, who was then fourteen, was encouraged by Marshal Batthany to oppose his mother openly for the first time. Now that he was growing up, Joseph was allowed to dine with his

parents and, though he often expressed unspoken boredom at this honour, he saw his mother more frequently and was able to talk to her without a special appointment.

When Joseph heard about the Franco-Austrian Treaty, he asked the Empress "if she deemed herself safe in trusting France, who had so frequently deceived her?" Maria Theresa's answer to Joseph is not recorded, but it is probable that she severely reminded him of his youth and told him to return to the school-room. Joseph and his mother were finding each other rather difficult at this time. Her iron domination of his life made him overbearing in his youthful desire to assert himself. And she was extremely angry with him, for she had been told of his secret admiration for her arch-enemy, Frederick of Prussia, and his opposition to her strict religious views. She knew that already he had been infected by the age of enlightenment in which he lived, an age which in so far as she was aware of it at all she increasingly detested.

Joseph's unsolicited criticism of her Franco-Austrian alliance made her realise afresh all the disappointment he was causing her. And this little scene between them was important, for it was the first of many quarrels which were to distress them both in the future.

Ignoring her family's opposition, Maria Theresa spent the winter of 1756–57 preparing for war. Frederick was becoming uneasy, and as his tactful inquiries, made through Baron Klinggraeffen, his military Attaché in Vienna, remained unanswered, he demanded in plain language to know the Empress's intentions. She replied vaguely that "in the present crisis involving all of Europe it is my duty to take all measures for the protection of Austria and her allies."

This reply made Frederick furious. "If Maria

Theresa's intentions are really unimpeachable," he wrote to Klinggraeffen, " the time has come for her to say so. If, however, she sends me another answer as vague as the vision of an oracle, her silence will confirm my fears concerning the dangerous schemes she is plotting against me with Russia. The consequences will be her own fault. I call upon heaven to witness that I shall be innocent of the disaster which will follow."

Frederick's statesmanship was obviously maturing; he no longer intended to strike his enemy boldly, damning the consequences. He was older now, and more experienced, and he was hoping to place the burden of war guilt on his opponent. He joined the outcry of the rulers and statesmen of Europe, who all declared that " they wanted nothing more ardently than peace."

Frederick published in Berlin a " Declaration of the motives which have obliged His Majesty, the King of Prussia, to prevent the designs of the Court of Vienna," for he had decided to delay no longer. On August 29, 1756, he " burst into Saxony " with 70,000 men on his way to Bohemia, occupied Dresden, and surrounded the Saxon troops who had retreated to the fortress of Pirna. The war, which was to last for seven years, had begun.

" The Seven Years War," as Professor Wolfgang Windelband points out, " was the first European War in the sense that all the states which we now include in Greater Europe were involved. None of the Great Powers and few of the smaller states were able to remain aloof from these hostilities. The object (the American continent) about which France and England were really fighting, caused this war to affect not only Europe, but every part of the world where Europeans had settled,"

CHAPTER ELEVEN

PSYCHOLOGICALLY, the Seven Years War was not as important for Maria Theresa as the Silesian wars. The earlier campaigns had been the chief factor in the development of her forceful personality, and in the establishment of her position and of her political prestige. Had she not asserted herself immediately after her ascent to the throne, the Pragmatic Sanction would never have been acknowledged. She would have remained an insignificant ruler, and the Habsburg dynasty, which had existed for five hundred years, would have ended with her. During the Seven Years War, by which she hoped fervently, though in vain, to reconquer Silesia, she was merely a member of the Great Coalition fighting against the further rise of Prussia; her country was one of several Great Powers involved in the struggle between France and England for the supremacy in Europe and on the American continent.

Maria Theresa's attitude, her activities, and the knowledge she displayed during the Seven Years War showed very definitely that she had matured, that her character was fixed. Her memoranda during the War reflect her really astonishing knowledge of strategy, of the larger issues at stake, and at the same time her incessant interest in the most trivial housewifely details.

She followed every movement of her armies, and though she often declared that she would not interfere with the decisions of her generals, she could not resist sending definite orders to them. Many times she saw

the situation more clearly than they did, but transportation was slow, and by the time her commands had reached the front, the position of her army had changed completely and confusion resulted.

Apart from following and supervising her troops' major operations, Maria Theresa was informed daily about minor developments in her armies. She supervised all military requisitions. She knew how much food was required by every soldier, how much fodder each horse should have; she herself carefully arranged for the shipment of blankets and uniforms and coats and caps to the front line. She organised the billeting of her troops in Vienna and elsewhere; she was, in fact, the army's chief quartermaster.

During the Seven Years War, Maria Theresa no longer allowed her personal prejudices to decrease her diplomatic efficiency. She treated her allies, Madame de Pompadour and Elisabeth of Russia, with the greatest tact and consideration. After Elisabeth's death in 1762, the Empress was equally courteous to Catherine, whom she really despised as highly immoral and disgusting, and whom she considered to be "as false as a Prussian by temperament." Maria Theresa's intolerance of the conduct of her countrymen and women never weakened, but she had learned that she must pretend to approve of these foreign women, whose co-operation was essential to her.

"Madame, ma sœur et cousine," she wrote with the insincerity of true diplomacy to Catherine on July 29, 1762, "I have always taken an affectionate interest in everything that concerns you, and I have heard with so much pleasure of the happy event of your ascent to the throne as ruler of all the Russias, that I must express this joy to you myself."

The fact that Maria Theresa was forced to be allied with Madame de Pompadour and the Russian Tsarinas is one of the great ironies of the Seven Years War. Her association with them is quite as strange as the fact that in this war, Frederick, who hated women as few other men in history have hated them, was confronted by four of the most gifted and the most formidable women of his age. He once comforted himself by saying that this alliance between Elisabeth, the Pampadour, and Maria Theresa—and later Catherine—could not, perhaps, be avoided, for "Dame Fortune has turned her back on me, but I must be prepared for this for, after all, she too is a woman, and I am not a gallant."

As far as her attitude towards the War was concerned, Maria Theresa had, in fact, made a clean sweep of her old prejudices. Just as she was determined to keep on good terms with these women who were her allies, she was resolved not to be hampered by any of her old illusions at home.

It became obvious, soon after the outbreak of hostilities, that she no longer made any pretensions to herself about Francis's military talents. She did not care what people in Austria and abroad would say if he stayed at home; his reputation was less important to her than the success of her armies. She flatly refused to allow Francis to go to the front. During the entire War he was ordered to remain in Vienna, attending to the financial administration of the country. To comfort her husband, Maria Theresa told him that she could not get along without him, but, naturally, Francis became an object of ridicule in Austria and abroad. "The Empress's attachment for him would not permit of a separation from her husband, or allow him to appear in the field," a contemporary commented. Francis did

not commit any expression of his bitterness to paper, or at least if he did, none of these documents have been preserved, but it must have been intolerable to him to learn that Frederick of Prussia, for instance, spoke with contempt of his "inglorious retreat into the arms of his wife."

Perhaps Francis's earlier military ambitions, too, had ceased entirely to exist, for outwardly he was calm and resigned. Perhaps he preferred the company of the Princess Auersperg to all military honours. The news of Frederick's invasion of Saxony reached Francis and Maria Theresa in Hungary, where they were hunting —for despite her great anxiety about the international situation she felt that she must occasionally join him on these expeditions. It is a significant fact that when the news came, Maria Theresa left for Vienna alone, and Francis, whom she had already informed that he was not to be on active service during the imminent war, continued the hunt.

The virtual dismissal of Francis from the army did not, however, successfully counteract the inefficiency of many of Maria Theresa's other generals. The tendency of the Austrians to postpone important decisions or actions, to delay and to wait, a characteristic of her people which Maria Theresa had recognised and feared in her youth, was an almost unsurmountable handicap throughout the War. The dilatoriness in the Austrians was also magnified by their Russian ally, who, to an even greater degree, lacked a sense of time and of urgency.

Despite Frederick of Prussia's brilliance and endurance, he might have been defeated by the Great Coalition consisting of Austria, France, Saxony, Russia, and Sweden, if Maria Theresa's generals had known when to strike quickly. Most students of strategy seem to

agree, for instance, that had General Leopold Daun, one of her most prominent commanders, pressed forward after his victory of Kollin in 1757, a victory so decisive that it forced Frederick to give up his aggressive campaign and take the offensive, the Prussian army might have been permanently crippled.

It must have exasperated Maria Theresa almost beyond endurance to be forced to remain in Vienna because she was a woman and could not command her armies herself. Her own impotence to force her generals into prompt action made her all the more despotic and impatient, and this, in turn, increased her officers' lack of assurance. As J. F. Bright says: "It would seem as if the very greatness of the Empress, her strong personality, and the efforts at centralisation she had so successfully been carrying out, acted harmfully upon the character of her generals. They lost much of their independence, and that readiness to assume responsibility in critical moments which is the essential for the vigorous prosecution of war."

Frederick, on the other hand, was his own commander-in-chief. He was constantly with his troops; he was never slow to act when once he had made up his mind, and his enemies' lack of decision was a great asset to him. He had marched into Saxony while they were discussing the war and quibbling over fine points in their alliances. He did not care what the world said about his invasion of "little Saxony," or that stories of Prussian "atrocities" became the chief topic of conversation in Europe. He never considered the invasion of Saxony as a moral issue; to him it was a necessity.

"At the beginning of the War," he wrote later, "it was first of all imperative to prevent Saxony from meddling in the affair, thus harming Prussia. To reach

Bohemia it was necessary to march through Saxony; if we had not taken possession of this country, an enemy would have been left in our rear, and this enemy, the Saxons, could have prevented the Prussians from using the Elbe for transportation."

Frederick spent the winter in Dresden, where he was feared as a ruthlessly severe master of Saxony. Augustus had left for Poland, and his wife, who for some curious reason decided to remain, was constantly exposed to annoyance from the Prussians.

Frederick was able to concentrate on the spring campaign before him. Maria Theresa, on the other hand, was never really free to devote herself entirely to the War. When hostilities began with Frederick's invasion of Saxony, Maria Theresa was pregnant for the last time. Her youngest, and sixteenth child, Maximilian, was born in December 1756. Court problems and family anxieties of one kind or another seemed always to intrude upon her. When conditions at the front were critical, her husband and her children and her courtiers expected as much attention from her as though the country had been at peace. Her heavy social duties continued. When, for instance, in 1762, the prodigy, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, was playing in Vienna, she allowed him to perform for her, and it is recorded that on this afternoon, which must have been one of many exhausting afternoons for the Empress, she fell down while romping with Marie Antoinette.

During the winter of 1756–57, when the first campaign was in progress, both Joseph and Marie Christina, her favourite daughter, were taken ill with small-pox, and when they were out of danger, their mother was constantly haunted by the fear that the disease would spread to other members of the household.

The spring campaign itself began with a bitter disappointment for her. Frederick had marched into Bohemia and defeated her armies at Lobositz on the left bank of the Elbe. General Browne, in command of the Austrian troops, was fatally wounded, and her troops withdrew to Prague, where they were immediately surrounded by the Prussians. Despite this defeat, however, the Austrians had inflicted losses on the Prussians almost equal to those they had suffered themselves, and Frederick and his officers realised that the new Austrian army " was different from the army they had formerly faced."

Prague was besieged for the third time since Maria Theresa succeeded her father. She was near despair. " I cannot too strongly impress upon your minds," she wrote to her officers in the besieged city, " that the troops will incur everlasting disgrace should they not effect what the French, in the last war, performed with far inferior numbers. The security of Bohemia, of my other hereditary dominions, and of the Empire itself, depends on the gallant defence and the preservation of Prague. The army under the command of General Daun is daily strengthening and will soon be in condition to raise the siege."

Prague did not surrender, but the reports of the Prussians' cruel and persistent siege roused sympathy for Maria Theresa and fear of Frederick all over Europe. Red-hot cannon-balls were shot into the city, and naturally the food supply was cut off by the Prussians. Before the city was forced to surrender, however, General Daun reached Kollin, not far from Prague, and Frederick was forced to withdraw his troops from the Bohemian capital.

The battle of Kollin, on June 18, 1757, was an over-

whelming victory for the Austrians, but the losses on both sides were terrible, Daun had lost about 9000 men and the Prussians 14,000. It was the first time that Frederick had been defeated by Maria Theresa's army. As those in power usually do, she forgot the death and the suffering of her soldiers and was overwhelmed with joy and thankfulness to her God and her General Daun.

She decorated him with the Order of Maria Theresa, an Order founded to celebrate this victory, and she wrote to him at once:

"The Monarchy owes you its preservation; and I owe you my very existence. May God keep you for a long time so that you can serve the State, the army, and my person as the best, the truest, and the noblest friend."

After his victory, Daun entered the liberated city of Prague, where his detachments joined those commanded by Prince Charles of Lorraine. Maria Theresa was so profoundly grateful to Daun that she was inclined to appoint him, instead of Charles, as the commander-in-chief of her armies, but Francis persuaded her to allow his brother to retain the chief command. Unfortunately for herself the Empress yielded to his wishes, for Charles, who was just recovering from a long illness, lacked the stamina necessary in this responsible post.

Apart from Charles's inability to act quickly, he obviously underestimated Frederick's endurance, which was at times almost superhuman. With incredible persistence, Frederick marched his weary troops backwards and forwards from Brandenburg to Silesia, the province round which, as far as Maria Theresa was concerned, the War was centred. Whenever her armies had successfully occupied Silesia, or a part of it, Frederick or his generals seemed to appear almost overnight to

reconquer the province. Again and again he crossed Prussia with his army during the Seven Years War, in winter and in summer; when the weather was severe, the gout in his hands was so painful that he could hardly grasp his horse's reins, at times he was so exhausted that he fell asleep in the saddle.

Frederick was profoundly depressed after his defeat at Kollin. "Had I fallen in this battle," he wrote to d'Argens, an old friend, "I should now be in a quiet harbour where I should no longer fear the storms, but I must sail ahead on this stormy sea, until a silent corner of the earth gives me the happiness which I could not find in this world."

His desperate mood, however, did not make him apathetic when he heard that Haddik, one of Maria Theresa's generals, had occupied a suburb of Berlin with a small detachment. Frederick was so angry at this invasion of his capital that he almost forgot his depression. He hurried some of his troops to Brandenburg and on November 5 inflicted a crushing defeat on the French and Imperial armies at Rossbach.

A few weeks later he had returned to the south and he was forced, after an Austrian victory at Schweidnitz, on November 22, temporarily to surrender Silesia. Maria Theresa's joy at recapturing her lost province was short-lived. At the battle of Leuthen, on December 5, 1757, where Charles of Lorraine's army was three times as large as Frederick's, the King of Prussia won another overwhelming victory.

France was extremely agitated by these Prussian victories and by her own defeat at Rossbach. Maria Theresa's other allies, the Russians, had captured Memel, but they had not made the most of this victory, and they proved to be disappointing allies. Besides, the

Swedes had been driven back to Pommerania; the King of Saxony and Poland had lost Saxony, his "other" country; Silesia was once again in the hands of the Prussians. Frederick, however, was dissatisfied with his success, for he had been unable to occupy Bohemia. Obviously, it was time for most of the countries involved to begin to think about peace.

Madame de Pompadour had persuaded Louis XV. to appoint her intimate friends as his ministers, and the Abbé de Bernis was the foreign minister. Bernis was discouraged at the close of 1757; he wanted peace. He wrote a very depressed letter to Stainville, who was Louis XV.'s representative in Vienna:

"I see that in ten or twelve days," Bernis wrote, "the Court of Vienna has lost three-fourths of its troops and officers; Russia is selling her artillery horses for a hundred sous apiece. Is it possible that the Tsarina, in her weakness and illness, can counteract the plans of Bestusheff, who has been bought by England with huge bribes? There is the Empress Maria Theresa without an army, and the French armies badly disciplined and without a general, and they are hemmed in between the Prussians and the Hanoverians.

"If I could see generals fit to command our armies, and a good military council in Versailles and in Vienna, I would not, in spite of our mistakes and our common misfortunes, give up the game. But as I can hope for no change in this respect, and time is pressing, I give my voice for peace. If the Austrian Court will let us negotiate, or negotiate with us, we may extricate ourselves honourably from these difficulties. Meanwhile let us arm: this is the first step to peace."

Maria Theresa and Kaunitz firmly rejected any suggestions of peace. They were supported in this policy

by Stainville himself, though later, when, as the Duke of Choiseul, he became the French Foreign Minister, he, too, tried to end hostilities. In 1757 it was largely due to Madame de Pompadour's increasing hatred of Frederick that Bernis's proposals were not accepted by the King of France. She wanted to see him utterly crushed by this war. "I hate the King of Prussia," Madame de Pompadour wrote, "I hate him more than ever. . . . Let us demolish this Attila of the North, then I shall be as contented as I am at present ill-humoured."

In 1758 all of the belligerent countries again began to think of peace. None of the Powers were satisfied with their doubtful gains during this campaign. Pitt, resolved to give Prussia England's active support, had reorganised the Hanoverian army, and placed it under the able command of Ferdinand of Brunswick. In June he won a victory over a French army at Krefeld and drove them across the Rhine. In August, however, Frederick defeated the Russians at Zorndorf, in Brandenburg, in the most terrible and sanguinary battle of the entire war.

Immediately after the battle of Zorndorf, Frederick marched his armies back to Silesia. The Austrian forces, under Daun, were assembled near the village of Hochkirch. Frederick was too weary from the long march to think clearly. He disregarded the advice of his generals and attacked the enemy. The battle of Hochkirch, fought on October 14, was an outstanding Austrian victory. Silesia had once more been conquered by Maria Theresa's armies, but it remained in Austrian hands only for a short time. For, though the battle of Hochkirch had driven Frederick into the defensive, he quickly recaptured his Silesian fortresses, and besieged Olmütz, in Bohemia.

Maria Theresa was near despair. "Even the battle of the fourteenth (Hochkirch)," she wrote to the Electress of Saxony, "has not comforted me." Vienna was seriously threatened, but despite her anxiety Maria Theresa refused to retire to Gratz, as her ministers suggested. "We shall receive the Prussians as best we can," she wrote, "and if there is no army in Vienna when they arrive, all of us, men and women, armed with rakes and clubs, will drive them out of the city."

When Olmütz finally resisted the siege and the Prussians fell back, the Empress was profoundly grateful to General Laudon and General Lacy, who were chiefly responsible for the achievements of this campaign. The Empress would not listen to the criticism of these two men by many of her aristocratic officers, who were jealous of their rapid rise in rank. She also refused to be influenced by the fact that they were "foreigners," Laudon being of Scottish, and Lacy of Irish descent.

France was more optimistic again, and a new treaty was concluded between France and Maria Theresa. Though the French promised to help her to recover Silesia, she no longer trusted them, for she realised that, in the vast struggle going on between France and England, Austria and her interests were relatively unimportant to France at the time. Maria Theresa therefore decided to work towards a closer co-operation with Russia in the future.

The campaign of 1579 was entirely different from those which had gone before, because Frederick was now on the defensive and the Austrians and their allies were forced to take the initiative. Maria Theresa's generals hated taking the initiative more than ever, and their lack of determination was particularly obvious during this campaign. For three months Daun did

nothing. His armies were billeted in Münchengratz in Bohemia, but as he could not make up his mind what to do, he remained completely inactive. In June the Russians defeated Frederick at Züllichau and came to join their Austrian allies.

This time Frederick had acted too quickly. He successfully drove back another Russian contingent from Frankfort on the Oder and then attacked a detachment of Austrians who, under General Laudon, had hurried north to help the Russians. But Frederick suffered a terrible defeat in the battle of Kunersdorf which followed. His situation was extremely serious; the French had again occupied Hanover; Silesia was once more in the hands of the Austrians. He was surrounded by enemies. Most men would have given up hope, but Frederick at once determined to take advantage of the lack of co-ordination between the Russians and the Austrians.

The Austrians had entered Saxony and captured Dresden, and Frederick's troops were defeated at Maxen, but he was able to drive the Russians out of Lower Silesia. He was very anxious but not desperate. "If you saw me now, you would hardly recognise me. I am old, broken, grey-haired, and wrinkled. I am losing my teeth and my gaiety," he wrote truthfully to Voltaire, but as the tone of this letter shows, he was already feeling cheerful enough to dramatise himself, and he was making plans once more to reconquer the entire province of Silesia.

The Austrian victory of Maxen and the occupation of Dresden were celebrated in Vienna as a great victory. Actually, if Daun had been abler, Frederick's defeat at Kunersdorf might have brought about his military extinction. Maria Theresa was now painfully aware

of Daun's inability, but she hated to discharge her generals as much as she disliked dismissing her ministers. Earlier in the War, after much hesitation, she had finally decided that Daun was to replace Charles of Lorraine as commander-in-chief of her armies, and she would have admitted her mistake if she had now dismissed Daun. She therefore merely reproved Daun indirectly by putting Laudon in charge of her armies in Silesia, while Daun remained in command in Saxony only.

The French, in the meantime, had been defeated by Ferdinand of Brunswick at Minden, on August 1, and there was talk of a general congress to discuss the peace. Kaunitz and Maria Theresa, however, refused to agree to such a plan, for Kaunitz, and quite rightly, feared that such a conference might endanger Austria's alliances with Russia, for the Russians' ineffectualness in the last campaign had created friction between St. Petersburg and Vienna. In such a congress, furthermore, Austria, as France's ally, would have been held by Pitt to be jointly responsible for the failures of the French army as well as for their own defeats. Kaunitz, therefore, used all his diplomatic skill to postpone this congress indefinitely. This was one of the outstanding diplomatic victories of his career, but the continuation of this war brought no benefits to Maria Theresa.

CHAPTER TWELVE

DURING her negotiations with France in 1759, when Maria Theresa, resolved to continue the War, was making such a determined effort to keep alive France's flagging interest in Austria, it became apparent that her political aims were far more important to her than the personal happiness of her children. She had less and less time for them.

As France was her most important ally, she made up her mind that Joseph, her eldest son and heir, who was then nineteen, must make a marriage which would please Louis XV. Isabella of Parma, Louis' granddaughter, was chosen as the Archduke's wife.

It had originally been arranged that Joseph was to marry the elder daughter of the King of Sicily, and Joseph grumbled when his mother, in her usual dictatorial manner, told him that she had changed her mind. The King of Sicily was annoyed as well, but with Kaunitz's help, Maria Theresa soothed him by allowing his second daughter to become engaged to her second son Charles, who was then fifteen. Contemporaries agree that the Empress was more fond of him than she was of Joseph, for Charles was less reserved than his elder brother, and less sensitive. Charles bore stoically his mother's sudden attacks of severity, her unexpected outbursts of affection, and her persistent domination.

Joseph was tall and blond; his forceful aquiline nose and his strong features made him seem older than he was. But he was young in his enthusiasms; his

mother's discipline had not curbed his spontaneity. Joseph fell in love with his new bride when he saw her portrait. He was fascinated at once by this picture of Isabella, which had been sent to Vienna by Count Mercy-Argenteau, who was then Maria Theresa's ambassador at Parma. The Count, who was later Marie Antoinette's fatherly adviser, was very much impressed by Isabella's charm and by her intelligence. "At eighteen," he wrote, "her attainments would have been thought remarkable in a clever young man."

Isabella, who was self-analytical to a morbid degree, did not think so highly of her own intellectual attainments, which to her seemed superficial. She once wrote to Marie Christine, her sister-in-law, that her mind was like her desk, the drawers of which contained "a little philosophy, a little morals, deep reflections, playful songs, history, physics, logic, novels, metaphysics, and a constant longing for Marie Christine."

Isabella was dark and frail and mysterious-looking. Her appearance contrasted sharply with that of Joseph's blonde tall sisters. She captured his imagination long before he met her, but, hating the kind of sentimentality displayed by his mother, he assumed a cynical manner, so like that of his hero, Frederick the Great, whenever he spoke of her before their marriage.

"I shall do everything," he wrote to his friend, Count Salm, "to win her respect and her confidence. But love? No, you know that it is impossible for me to be agreeable, to pose as a lover. That is against my nature."

When Joseph met Isabella, his cynicism was forgotten. He was swept off his feet, and he hated the formality of their earlier meetings. Neither the war nor her son's passion for simplicity had prevented Maria Theresa from arranging a pompous wedding for her heir,

Prince Wenzel Liechtenstein had gone to Parma to act as the Archduke's representative at the wedding by proxy, and Isabella was escorted to Vienna by a splendid cortège. On October 1, 1760, the bride reached Vienna, where Francis met her at the gates of the city. Maria Theresa and Joseph were waiting for his bride in the hunting lodge at Laxenburg.

Joseph himself said that his marriage was "unsurpassed in happiness." Her tragic death, three years later, broke him completely. Had Isabella lived, she might well have developed into a remarkable woman. As it is, no biography has been written about her, and she is mentioned only in the books about her husband or her mother-in-law. Though Isabella was neurotic to the extreme in her introspection, she had a genius for adjusting herself to new surroundings and to the moods of others. Francis adored her, the Princess Auersperg liked her, she became the confidante of Joseph's brothers and sisters, and Maria Theresa could not express enough admiration for her.

"We have gained a charming daughter-in-law in every respect," the Empress wrote a few days after her son's marriage, "and I am completely happy. The weather, the festivities, everything, in short, was all that could be desired. I quite forgot that I was a King, I was so happy as a mother. If only the good God would send us such news as would justify negotiations for peace, I should have nothing left to desire."

Isabella had come from the small Court at Parma, but despite her reserve and her shyness, she was never for an instant at a loss in Vienna. Nor was she impressed with the unaccustomed splendour of her mother-in-law's Court. Apart from her sure instinct for the moods of others, an instinct that was more than tact, she was

curiously mature in her conscious understanding of the various members of her husband's family, and she realised at once that his futile efforts to assert himself against his mother's domination had made him cold, suspicious, and at times a little overbearing. " He is not primarily emotional," she once wrote, " and he often puts down caresses or words of endearment to flattery or hypocrisy unless one has established a sure claim to his esteem. Given esteem, friendship follows as a matter of course."

The fact that Isabella analysed her husband's character so carefully indicates that her emotions for him never overwhelmed her. Joseph did not suspect this fact until after her death, and Maria Theresa in her innocence of unconventional or abnormal human relationships considered their marriage an entirely happy union. Actually, however, Isabella had formed a passionate attachment, not to her husband, but to his sister, Marie Christine. During her entire marriage, Isabella was forced to conceal her real self from her husband ; her life was a constant strain.

Marie Christine was eighteen when Isabella came to Vienna. She had previously been in love with Prince Louis of Württemberg, but her mother had not allowed her to marry him. Later, when the Archduchess's personality had fully matured, she was the only one of Maria Theresa's daughters who had any influence on their mother. Marie Christine persuaded her parents in 1766 to allow her to marry Prince Albert of Saxony, Augustus's fourth son, who had no chances of becoming a ruling Prince until the Empress presented him with the Duchy of Teschen.

" The Archduchess Marie Christine," a contemporary wrote several years afterwards, when her other sisters were as much afraid of their mother as they had been

in their childhood, "has at least emancipated herself from the confinement of her two sisters. She is unquestionably a very superior woman, and merits that I should enter with some minuteness into her character, and the history of her life. . . . Her person—in spite of a delicate constitution—possesses many charms. Her figure is of the middle size, well formed, and finely proportioned; her eyes are full of vivacity, her features noble, as well as regular. Though naturally of a pale complexion, she wears no rouge—a renunciation submitted to, as may be presumed, more from deference to the Empress's pleasure than from choice. Over all her limbs and motions is diffused an air of grandeur, which announces her high birth. Naturally distant and haughty, she can nevertheless, when such is her pleasure, temper her demeanour with the most gracious and winning condescension. It is difficult to imagine a Princess more formed to represent the majesty of the Throne. Nor is it only her person to which Nature has been liberal; she possesses talents capable of producing very important consequences, beneficial or injurious. Ambitious, enterprising, and in no way deficient in political courage, she is not formed for the seclusion of private life, or for the uniform monotony of her mother's palace. . . . With such personal and intellectual endowments, it cannot, or ought not, to excite surprise that she has always been the favourite daughter of Maria Theresa; and that she possesses no inconsiderable ascendancy over her mother's political as well as private conduct."

Though Marie Christine and Isabella were the same age when they met, their correspondence show that Marie Christine entirely dominated their relationship. They were together as much as they could be; they

read, talked, played, and sang, and Isabella seems to have spent most of the hours when she was separated from her sister-in-law in writing to her. She was unhappy in this love affair. To her it was the *grand passion* of her life, whereas for Marie Christine it was obviously merely one of these attachments to a woman which many girls form before they are married.

"I am writing to you again, cruel sister," Isabella once wrote, "though I have only just left you. I cannot bear waiting to know my fate, and to learn whether you consider me a person worthy of your love, or whether you would like to fling me into the river. I cannot tolerate this uncertainty, I can think of nothing but that I am madly in love. If only I knew why this is so, for you are so cruel that one should not love you, but I cannot help myself."

"I am told," Isabella wrote on another occasion, "that the day begins with God. I, however, begin the day by thinking of the object of my love, for I think of her incessantly."

Isabella grieved not only because she was more fond of Marie Christine than her sister-in-law was of her, but also because it meant a nervous tension to conceal this emotional struggle from her husband. There is no record of the manner in which she and Marie Christine kept their attachment a secret from him, but among their correspondence—and they indiscreetly kept each other's letters—there are several notes which indicate that this must have been difficult.

"My deep love for you," Marie Christine once wrote to her brother's wife, "prompts me to send you this note. I beg you because of that love to listen to what I have to say. You know what happened yesterday. It may lead to endless trouble if you persist in your

attitude. I have convinced the Archduke that he was in the wrong. To be frank, you were equally so, but it was just as well to ignore that fact. I beseech you, therefore, when you meet him, to act as though nothing had happened. If he is slow to make advances, take no notice. Should he refer to the disagreement, treat it as a joke. If you follow this course, I can make him feel more guilty than ever. But try to give in to him more, and to not take him too seriously."

Isabella's constant conflict between her sense of duty to Joseph and her feelings for Marie Christine, made her feel guilty, and this had a disastrous effect on her. The problem before her seemed insoluble and, increasingly, the thought of death occupied her mind. Frightened of life, she was sure that she would die young. Death seemed the only escape from her emotional impasse.

"When will this life with its misery, its sorrow, its distress, finally cease?" she wrote. "When will the soul be freed from the shackles which bind it to the body, and when will it soar up to its heavenly home?" And to Marie Christine she once wrote: "Death is good. Never have I thought of it more than at present. Everything causes me to hope that I shall die soon. . . . What business have I in this world? I am good for nothing. If it were right to kill oneself, I should have done it before now."

When Marie Christine, a healthy girl, who loved life, refused to listen to Isabella's gloomy thoughts of death, Isabella wrote out a series of reminders for her sister-in-law to read "after her death." They included advice as to how the Archduchess was to deal with her mother, her brothers, and her sisters.

Marie Christine resented Isabella's occupation with death, and as she was genuinely fond of her sister-in-

law, she tried to curb her morbid imagination. "Allow me to tell you," Marie Christine wrote to Isabella, "that your longing for death is entirely evil. It points either to selfishness, or to a desire on your part to seem heroic, and it is out of harmony with your loving disposition. It should be repugnant to you to express sentiments which so deeply grieve people who are absolutely devoted to you."

At times, Isabella managed to conceal her depression; at others she retired to her own apartments and gave way to her desire. Above all, her misery had to be kept from the Empress, who never had the slightest knowledge of the domestic tragedy which was occurring under her very eyes. She was pleased because her daughter and her daughter-in-law became inseparable companions, she jestingly called Isabella Marie Christine's "dear other half" ("votre chère moitié"). When Joseph's and Isabella's daughter—called Theresa after his mother—was born, the Empress had no idea whatsoever that this child might have caused her daughter-in-law great unhappiness.

When Isabella died in the autumn of 1763, Joseph was more than grief-stricken. He went on living and working, but for a time at least he was numbed. Something which never revived went dead within him. When he wrote to her father immediately after his wife's death that "he had lost everything," he himself may not quite have realised how true this was. His attachment to her, a woman now dead, his need to "gaze at her portrait and to handle her writings and other possessions" to pretend that she was talking to him, gave him an abnormal sense of detachment from the real world. "I have lost her," he wrote, "and I am only twenty-two."

It has recently been stated that after Isabella's death, Marie Christine, carried away by her own grief,

let her brother know that, even while she lived, Isabella had not loved him, but her. It may be true that Joseph learned about his wife's and his sister's attachment, for all contemporaries comment on Joseph's intense dislike of his sister Marie Christine.

"It is well known," one contemporary comments, "that the Emperor (Joseph) considers her as a powerful rival, capable of frustrating his views, and of impeding, if not totally overturning, his best-matured plans of ambition or policy, by awakening the Empress's scruples, and touching her maternal feelings."

It would never have occurred either to Joseph or to his sister to discuss their tragedy with Maria Theresa. None of her children confided in her, they were too much in awe of her, and they knew that their mother had no understanding for the overtones of life, for emotions that were not entirely conventional. She was increasingly literal-minded in her affections. She was one of those women who think that children must automatically love their parents, and as a result of this attitude she was increasingly alone.

Politically, Joseph's marriage to Louis's niece had been somewhat disappointing, for again and again, despite this union, France had insisted on ending the war with a peace which would have been unfavourable for Austria.

Choiseul's point of view changed after he became Foreign Minister, and he was being extremely difficult. It was not until Spain became an ally of France that she consented to continue the war. Kaunitz and Starhemberg had worked hard to keep Choiseul interested in the war. This was a delicate, diplomatic task; Maria Theresa was apparently doomed always to experience almost as much trouble with her allies as with her enemies.

It seems curious that Maria Theresa was so insistent

that hostilities should be continued, for as Eugene Guglia points out, her intense anxiety earlier in the war had given way to a state of mind bordering on apathy. "Actually she was completely resigned during the last years of the War," he says, "and though she continued to encourage and urge her generals to act more quickly, she did so more from a sense of duty than from a belief in the possibility of her ultimate success."

The death of George II. in 1760 caused many statesmen in Europe to press more insistently for peace. For his grandson, George III., had been born and brought up in England, and he was not particularly concerned with his Hanoverian Electorate. A contemporary historian records with pride that George III., in his first declaration to his Privy-Council, used the words "this my native country"—a phrase "excessively grateful to British ears." George was so anxious to end the War that the ministry of Pitt fell and Bute succeeded him. Maria Theresa, however, continued to oppose any suggestion of peace.

The campaign of 1760 did not begin very well for her. Daun, Laudon, and Lacy were quarrelling incessantly, and as she was still consistently (and foolishly) loyal to all of her generals, she did not deal with this situation firmly enough. She was kind, tolerant, and grateful to them all.

Laudon was defeated by Frederick's armies at the battle of Liegnitz on August 15, though Daun's detachments were so near that "he must have heard the cannon during the battle." Soltikov, the commander of the Russian forces which had been hurried to Laudon's assistance, also claimed "that he heard nothing of this battle." On November 3, Frederick attacked Daun at Torgau, north of Dresden, and this, too, was a defeat for the Austrians.

Silesia and Saxony were being captured and recaptured again and again, like pawns in a game, but nothing really decisive had happened. Even Kaunitz began to wonder whether it would not be wiser to negotiate for peace.

The next year, however, was somewhat more hopeful for Austria. France had been defeated by England on the American continent, and England, now firmly established as a world power, needed Prussia's support no longer. Frederick's armies were exhausted. He was defeated on October 9, 1761, by Laudon at Schweidnitz in Silesia, and Kolberg in East Prussia was captured by the Russians.

Kaunitz believed that Austria might now conclude a more favourable peace. Besides, Elisabeth of Russia was dying, and it was well known that Peter III., her successor, was an admirer of Frederick of Prussia, and that, undoubtedly, Russia would join Prussia after the Tsarina's death. Now, however, Choiseul, who was again in a warlike mood, did not wish to talk of peace, and when Elisabeth died on January 5, 1762, Austria had lost a somewhat ineffectual, but yet powerful ally.

Peter immediately dismissed his German prisoners, and signed a peace treaty with Prussia. Frederick, who realised that his situation was saved at the eleventh hour, could now withdraw his armies from the eastern frontiers and concentrate them in Silesia. By May, when Peter was murdered, Frederick's strength had revived.

Catherine, " little Sophie Zerbst," Peter's widow and successor, whose hatred of Frederick was equal to that of the other women involved in the Seven Years War, at once declared war on Prussia. Tchernikoff, her General in Silesia, was ordered to change his position and to fight with the Austrians against Prussia. It is recorded as an historical fact that Frederick persuaded Tchernikoff with

the help of a diamond-studded dagger and 15,000 ducats to remain with the Prussian army three days after his orders had been received from Catherine. These three days were, in the end, the decisive factor in bringing about Frederick's ultimate success in the Seven Years War.

The organisation of Daun's intelligence service was as slack as his command on the field of battle, and he did not hear about Catherine's instructions to Tchernikoff until it was too late. Daun had kept half of his army in reserve to fight against the Russians. Frederick attacked the remaining Austrian contingents at Schweidnitz and won a complete victory. A few weeks later his brother Henry won another decisive vistory over the Austrians east of Schweidnitz. Silesia was again in Prussian hands. Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick in the meantime, at the battle of Kassel, had driven the French out of Hesse early in November. At the last moment and partly because of the treachery of the Russians, Silesia had been permanently snatched from Maria Theresa.

Territorially, Europe was unchanged after the War, but the balance of power on the Continent had been definitely altered. For France had been forced to surrender Canada to England, whose ascendancy was thus assured, and Frederick of Prussia had irrevocably held Silesia. The permanent peace of Europe was not assured even by this futile and terrible war, for Augustus III. of Poland and Saxony died in October 1763, and the question of the Polish succession loomed up dangerously on the political horizon.

Maria Theresa had gained nothing whatsoever from the War, except that Frederick promised to support Joseph at the election of the King of the Romans. Her prestige had suffered in the War; alone and surrounded by enemies, Frederick had been able to defeat her.

No one, not even Maria Theresa, could believe any longer that Frederick's earlier victory in the Silesian War had been a passing success. Prussia had risen to a permanent position among the great powers of Europe.

The literature and the popular songs of the day show that Frederick, who increasingly as he grew old and bitter despised all Germans, had become a hero not only in Prussia, but in Germany as a whole. Many Germans felt greater patriotic fervour for this cynical old man who had defeated half of Europe than for Francis of Lorraine, Maria Theresa's husband, who was, officially, the leader of all Germans, and their Emperor. Even in Austria, as some songs in a collection of Austrian folk-songs during the Seven Years War indicate, hero worship of Frederick of Prussia was not uncommon. There is one song, for instance, sent by a Tirolese to a man in Nuremberg :

"Reichsbürger wollt ihr sein und brecht doch eure Pflicht
Wie seid ihr kaiserlich, da ihr doch Preussisch denket ?"

Apart from her grief at the outcome of the War, Maria Theresa suffered many personal tragedies at this time. Her daughter Joanna died at the age of twelve in 1762 ; her son Charles, whom she really loved, had died of small-pox the year before ; Isabella had died in November 1763.

Earlier in her career, Maria Theresa had experienced the pains of birth. She had borne many children. Politically, in the Silesian Wars, she and her people had suffered as she asserted herself in Europe, as she revived the greatness of her Family. Then the sufferings of the War had been tempered by hope, by thoughts of the future. Now, after the Seven Years War, she seemed surrounded by death and hopeless despair.

It was fortunate for her that, by temperament, she was unable to think of herself in terms of failure. Her faith in her Habsburg Mission never wavered.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

AFTER the Seven Years War, Maria Theresa realised with bitterness that as long as she and Frederick of Prussia lived, Silesia would be lost to Austria. But as, in retrospect, she thought of the past centuries of Habsburg rule, she looked forward to an endless future in which the power of her Family would gradually increase, and Silesia would again become part of the Empire. She began to live for the future, and her hopes, therefore, were centred in Joseph, who must, so she was determined, one day reconquer her lost Province.

She must have known for some time that her son would be more difficult to manage than her husband had been. When, for instance, she had expected Joseph to curb his grief after the death of his wife, he had not done so. She was chagrined to realise that at times his personal emotions were to him more vital than his feeling of responsibility towards the State. And harsh realist that Maria Theresa had become—except when it came to admitting the faults of her generals—she was also annoyed by his fantastic and youthful idealism, his obvious approval of many democratic principles.

The Empress had disapproved of Joseph when she allowed him to attend the meetings of the *Staatsrat*, the Council of State, which was established during the War to co-ordinate the work of the various departments of State. The members of this Council had no real authority, and it was merely a clearing-house for various departmental problems. Joseph therefore remained un-

impressed by the long and usually futile debates he heard at these meetings. He did not trouble to conceal his contempt for the Council, and Maria Theresa was furious when she heard what he had said about it.

"I hoped to find myself among Solons and Lycurguses," Joseph wrote ironically later, "and to listen to oracles. The endless speeches and long-winded explanations were so far above me that I understood neither their import nor their relevance, but only the words. I was badly advised to think of other matters when I should have imbibed these artful contortions which were supposed to replace reason and common sense."

Joseph's lack of seriousness, which Maria Theresa hoped to overcome in due course, did not deter her from her one great ambition after the War: to have him elected as King of the Romans—that is to say, as Francis's successor as Holy Roman Emperor. This was not easy, for the Holy Roman Emperor was elected by a majority vote of the German Electorates—usually there were seven—while the King of the Romans had to be chosen by a unanimous vote.

After Isabella's death, when Joseph was indifferent to life, his mother doubled her efforts on his behalf, and made him, too, automatically perform the gestures which would further his candidature at the Elections which were to be held in Frankfort in the spring of 1764.

Immediately after Isabella's death, furthermore, when the thought of any other woman was intolerable to Joseph, Maria Theresa began to discuss his second marriage with him. She took it for granted that he would overcome his grief when political necessity demanded, and she was impatient with him when he refused to recognise the advantages to be derived from another wise marriage. She occasionally indulged her

son by weeping with him, but she was hard and relentless when he begged her not to arrange a second marriage for him at once.

As long as his mother lived, Joseph was dominated by her. "If I were not so deeply attached to you," he wrote to Maria Theresa after she had finally broken down his resistance, "I should remain a widower all my life. Or rather I would be for ever united with my beautiful angel in heaven. I see that my devotion to you will cause me to change my mind, but may God keep it from being the misfortune of my life."

At heart Joseph must have condemned his mother for her insensitiveness. Had he been her only son, the succession in the male line would have been endangered had he remained unmarried and childless, but as it was, he had two brothers. His brother, Leopold, who was then sixteen, did finally succeed him.

In the end Joseph realised that he could not endure his mother's insistence any longer, and that he must yield to her and to Kaunitz. The Chancellor was busily helping the Empress to select the bride who would bring the most advantages to Austria.

Many young women were suggested as candidates. France and Spain urged Maria Theresa to marry her son to Princess Kunigunde of Saxony; the Bavarian Elector suggested his sister Josepha; the Duke of Orleans recommended his daughter; the King of Portugal thought that a Princess from the House of Braganza would be a good wife for the Habsburg heir; Princess Elisabeth of Brunswick and Wilhelmine of Prussia were also mentioned.

Finally, two candidates remained in the running, the Princess of Saxony and the Princess of Bavaria. "Both," Joseph wrote, "are marked in black in my soul, and,

as far as I am concerned, they could not be worse than they are."

Before the Empress had decided which of these two Princesses her son was to marry, it was time for him to go to Frankfort to be crowned as King of the Romans. Joseph left Vienna with his father and his brother Leopold on March 12.

Joseph wrote to his mother almost daily, pathetically begging her to change her mind about his marriage. "Unless it be as a proof of my love for you, dear mother," he wrote, "I will never marry again. The days which have just passed have torn open my wound cruelly. The image of my adorable wife is so deeply graven on my heart that at every moment it seems to me that she might return to me. When a courier is announced, I find myself half expecting news from her. And to think that all that is over. When I tell you that I am weeping as I write these words, you will understand the exceeding greatness of my sorrow."

After his election, which he knew would please his mother, and perhaps soften her, Joseph made one more attempt to explain his point of view to her. "My election occurred on March 27," he wrote to her, "four months to a day since the departure of that dear spirit. On the twenty-ninth it was four months since I was separated from all of her that was mortal, and that was the day of my public entry into Frankfort. What a difference it would have made if these ceremonies had been graced by the presence of my Queen. Forgive me, dear mother, if I grieve you by these words. But have pity on a son who is deeply attached to you, but who is on the verge of despair."

The pompous coronation was a most painful experience for Joseph, who hated ceremony even when he was

feeling at his best. In Frankfort, as he wrote somewhat querulously to his mother, he " had to chatter all day and say pretty nothings," and it cost him an effort not to tell the pompous men round him what he really thought about them. He longed to let them know " that they were behaving like idiots."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, a native of Frankfort, who adored pomp all his life, was a youth of fifteen when Joseph was crowned as King of the Romans. Goethe was profoundly impressed by this spectacle, and he records the day in his *Dichtung und Wahrheit.* The young poet was dazzled by " the richly dressed servants and attendants, and the majestically moving nobility," and by the " black-costumed magistrates and councillors," by " the gold "—but he realised that the newly elected King was not entirely happy.

" Finally both majesties made their appearance," Goethe wrote. " The Emperor's vestments of purple silk, richly adorned with pearls and precious stones, as well as the crown, sceptre, and imperial orb, struck the eye, for everything was novel, and the imitation of antiquity tastefully carried out. The Emperor moved comfortably in his robes, and his loyal, dignified face proclaimed both the Emperor and the father. The young King, however, dragged himself along in his monstrous raiments, so that he, himself, glancing at his father from time to time, could hardly restrain a smile. The crown, which had required a great deal of padding, stood out from his head like an overhanging roof."

Joseph had made a gallant effort to play his part well at this coronation. If he hoped, by his excellent behaviour, to cause his mother to relent about his marriage, he had been mistaken. He had, however, succeeded in troubling her conscience. When she

finally selected Princess Josepha of Bavaria as his second wife, Maria Theresa was not quite happy about the manner in which she had forced this undesired and, from all accounts, unattractive bride on her eldest son.

"You are to have a sister-in-law," the Empress wrote to Marie Christine, who was away from home, "and I a daughter-in-law. Unfortunately, it is Princess Josepha. I hated settling this affair without my son's co-operation. But neither to me, nor to the Emperor, nor to Kaunitz would he express any preference. . . . And the worst of it is that we must pretend to be pleased and happy. My head and my heart are not at one on this subject, and it is difficult to retain my equanimity."

Maria Theresa, who had been so intuitive in her youth, no longer obeyed her instincts. Her political desires dominated her purely human reactions to any situation. Had she allowed her feelings to influence her mind, she would have realised that this marriage would be useless from the point of view of continuing the Habsburg race.

Joseph and Josepha were married at Schönbrunn early in 1765. He made a valiant attempt to overcome the physical repulsion he felt for his wife, who, as he wrote to Isabella's father, "is twenty-six years old, has a small squat figure, and is without youthful charm. She had red spots and pimples on her face; her teeth are hideous. She had no qualities, in fact, which could have persuaded me to resume the marital state, in which I had once been so happy."

The situation was all the more difficult for Joseph, because his wife loved him, and when, despite his painful efforts, he was unable to live with her, he began to dislike her, because she was on his conscience, and he felt sorry for her. In the end he hated her. Maria Theresa,

too, never saw her daughter-in-law without being reminded of her own terrible mistake.

The Court avoided Josepha, because her obvious unhappiness made every one uncomfortable. She was virtually an outcast at the *Hofburg* and at Schönbrunn. "If I were she," Marie Christine once confessed, "I would run away and hang myself on a tree at Schönbrunn."

Josepha died of small-pox in 1767. The only person who was consistently kind to her was Francis, and she adored him and clung to him. But she did not enjoy his comforting presence for long, as he died eight months after her marriage.

Luckily for her own peace of mind, Maria Theresa was too busy to brood about Joseph's miserable marriage. Her other children needed her attention. She was particularly concerned with Leopold, whose position had become a more important one since the death of his elder brother Charles. Leopold was now his father's heir as Grand Duke of Tuscany. Later, Leopold lived in Florence for twenty years, until the death of Joseph made it necessary for him to return to Vienna to be crowned as Leopold II.

Leopold, like Joseph, had not inherited his father's jovial manner; he was exceedingly reserved. He shared his elder brother's scepticism of the rigid religious doctrines instilled into them since their youth by Maria Theresa, and he often sided with Joseph, to whom he was devoted, against his mother. Like her, Leopold was later the parent of sixteen children, but apart from her devotion to them, she and this son had nothing in common.

The Empress devoted much thought to Leopold's

marriage, and in the summer of 1765 it was finally decided that he was to marry Marie Louise, the daughter of Charles III. of Spain. In the summer, Maria Theresa, her family, and her Court travelled to Innsbruck, where Leopold was to be married to the Infanta.

Marie Christine was to be a prominent member of this bridal party, for in Innsbruck she, too, was to meet her future husband, the Duke of Chablais, a son of the King of Sardinia. The Archduchess, who had already determined to marry Prince Albert of Saxony, was opposing her mother's wishes with all the force of her buoyant young personality.

The Empress who was really disturbed by her daughter's resistance, did not look forward to this journey to Innsbruck. Her own discontent reacted on her surroundings. Besides, she always "dreaded the heat," for she had grown exceedingly stout. From the very beginning, this journey was a trial for her ladies-in-waiting and for Francis. The Empress insisted on leaving the *Hofburg* at four o'clock in the morning. Her habit of early rising, so unimportant in itself, had exasperated Francis for years. He was now a comfortable middle-aged man who hated to be hurried, and he had not been particularly well that summer. It was rumoured that he suffered occasionally from apoplectic fits.

At any rate, Maria Theresa was not in a cheerful mood as she drove out of the *Hofburg* on July 4, 1765. Francis added to her sense of irritation by saying a long and fond farewell to his children after they were seated in the carriage and ready to leave. And when his wife thought that at last he would give the coachman the order to start, he delayed their departure again and sent for little Marie Antoinette to kiss her good-bye once more.

Maria Theresa was unusually silent on this journey. She was unable to overcome her sense of foreboding. "I look forward to seeing you," she had written to her old friend Countess Enzenberg, who lived in Innsbruck, because her husband was the Governor of the Tirol. "I need comforting, for I am weary and depressed—and not without reason."

Leopold and Francis, who had gone to Bozen to meet Leopold's bride, reached Innsbruck with her on August 2. The young couple were married on the fifth, and Maria Theresa was glad to have this ceremony successfully over. But her relief was short-lived. After the marriage ceremony everything in Innsbruck seemed to go wrong.

The day after his wedding, Leopold was taken seriously ill with a fever, and he spent his honeymoon with several physicians in attendance. The news also reached Innsbruck that Isabella's father, the Duke of Parma, had died suddenly of small-pox, and this made Joseph more morose and unsociable than ever. Marie Christine, too, was being difficult, for she had secretly arranged to have Albert of Saxony come to Innsbruck, and as a result, the Duke of Chablais was naturally annoyed. Anxiety and friction prevailed in Innsbruck.

All these anxieties were forgotten, however, when, on August 18, Maria Theresa experienced the greatest tragedy of her life. Francis died quite suddenly on that day.

Maria Theresa had consistently concealed her inner agitation from the Court, and the festivities connected with Leopold's wedding were continued despite the absence of the bridegroom. A performance of the Italian players had been arranged for the evening of the 18th. Francis had not been quite well during the day, but his indisposition was put down to indigestion,

and he went with his son Joseph to attend this performance. When he returned to the palace he suddenly felt faint and leaned against the nearest doorway in the passage through which he and his son were passing. Joseph hurried to fetch a chair, and asked his father to sit down while he went for the doctors. Francis said that he would feel better in a moment, and told Joseph not to wait for him. Immediately after he had spoken, however, he collapsed and died.

Maria Theresa, who had been waiting for her husband in her apartments, heard the commotion in the palace and came out to see what had happened. Unprepared, she came into the room into which the doctors had taken Francis. The shock so stunned her that she was unable to move or to speak, and was finally carried to her own rooms.

She locked herself up and refused to see any one for hours. Even after she had been bled by the physicians, who feared that her mind had been temporarily affected, she would not receive any one.

The next morning she still appeared to be entirely apathetic from grief, but she summoned those of her children who were in Innsbruck, and made arrangements for moving Francis's remains to Vienna. "The shock," as Albert of Saxony wrote to his parents, "had not caused her to suffer a physical breakdown." She sent for Francis's chamberlains, and learned among other things that the day before his death Francis had instructed his treasurer to pay the sum of 200,000 florins to the Princess Auersperg, whose passion for gambling had increased with the years. When she heard this news, which was particularly distressing, as in his will Francis had left everything to Joseph and nothing to his younger children, Maria Theresa was not overcome

by a fresh spasm of weeping, but calmly ordered the sum to be paid. While Francis lived, she had been utterly intolerant of his private life, but now her pettiness vanished, and she gallantly performed this most painful duty.

As long as she lived, Maria Theresa was profoundly grieved and worried because her husband had died without confessing to a priest and without receiving absolution. For though she idealised him fanatically after his death, she must have been honest enough to remember that from her point of view he had sinned. Francis himself left 10,000 florins to be paid for Masses which were to be said for his soul.

When she was an old woman, Wraxall reports: "She never failed on the eighteenth day of every month to repair very early in the morning to the vault of the Capuchins in Vienna, where her husband's remains were deposited. Even in the winter, she was there before the dawn, notwithstanding the rigour of the season, and her many infirmities. The vault was lighted up, while on her knees she poured out supplications for the repose of his soul."

Before she had left Innsbruck after Francis's death, Maria Theresa had written to Kaunitz assuring him that he was becoming more indispensable than ever. "I count upon you, and will do nothing without asking your advice," she had written. "I can trust you with the interests of my family as confidently as with affairs of State." As soon as she returned to Vienna, furthermore, she had appointed Joseph, now the Holy Roman Emperor, as her co-Regent in the Habsburg dynasty. With Kaunitz's help, so the Empress felt sure, Joseph could perform his new duties efficiently, so that she herself would be freer to abandon herself to her grief.

While she was still in Innsbruck, Maria Theresa also softened towards Marie Christine, and consented to her marriage with Albert of Saxony. The Empress's children had never known their mother to be so mellow and so approachable.

After Maria Theresa returned to Vienna, where, of course, the Court was commanded to observe the deepest mourning, she seemed utterly dazed. For the first time in her active life, she became obsessed with the past. "Emperor Francis, my husband," she wrote in her Prayer Book, "lived 56 years, 8 months, 10 days. He died on August 18, 1765, at half-past nine in the evening. This means that he lived 680 months, 2958 weeks, 20,778 days, and 496,992 hours. My happy married life lasted 29 years, 6 months, and 6 days; this is 335 months, 1540 weeks, 10,781 days, and 258,744 hours."

She moved at once from the room she had shared for twenty-nine years with Francis to the third floor in the *Hofburg*. Her new apartments were draped with black velvet; she wore only black and wore her hair cut short as a symbol of her despair. She prayed and confessed incessantly. The ladies at the Court were instructed to wear mourning and to give up the use of rouge. It is said that the Princess Auersperg, who had never been as fond of Francis as he had been of her, was enraged by these orders, and said, "Is it possible that one cannot be the mistress of one's own face? I thought that God had given me my face, and not the government."

Gradually, Maria Theresa recovered somewhat from the shock of her husband's sudden death. She became aware of her own hazy frame of mind. This was the first step towards her recovery. By the New Year of 1766 she was completely conscious of her condition, and though as long as she lived she never ceased wearing

mourning and outwardly lamenting Francis's loss, she was beginning again to take an interest in the government of her country. "I hardly know myself," she wrote to Tarouca in a New Year's letter, which reflects her increasing desire for renewed activities, "for I have become like an animal without real life or reasoning power. I arise at five. I retire late, and I seem to do nothing all day long. It is a terrible state to be in, but I revive a little when I see my old acquaintances."

While his mother's apathy lasted, Joseph had plunged himself into his new work as a monarch. His mother had officially appointed him as her co-Regent on November 17, 1765, though the wording of this appointment reflects her obvious intention of curtailing his power when and how she saw fit. Despite her apparent indifference to everything but her grief, she was always fully conscious of her royal authority. "We have decided," she had declared, "on a co-regency of our entire hereditary kingdoms and lands, without, however, relinquishing our own control over our inseparable states, and, consequently, without the slightest violation of the Pragmatic Sanction."

Joseph was so eager for work that he often forgot that he was not really the ruler of Austria. His youthful energy annoyed his mother's old ministers, and he made himself unpopular with them at once by letting them know that, apart from Kaunitz, he felt contempt for them all. "None of them have rendered the State any service for years," he declared.

The young Emperor's tireless activity gave him the first real relief after the death of his wife. He got up at half-past six every day, heard Mass, and was at his desk by eight o'clock. At twelve he had to submit his morning's reports to his mother, but for many months

after Francis's death her inertia was so great that she did not bother with him.

Kaunitz interfered with the young man far more than his mother was doing. The Empress, who was such a harsh disciplinarian of her children, was incredibly tolerant of her Chancellor's peculiarities, which had become more marked now that he was older. Kaunitz, spoiled by years of pampering by the Empress, now devoted several hours every morning to his toilet, and he came to the *Hofburg* when it suited his convenience. He never minded keeping Joseph waiting. "According to Kaunitz's pleasant habit," Joseph wrote ironically to his brother Leopold, "he appears at one o'clock, when we are about to sit down to table. The interview is to be short, but many days it lasts for an hour and a half. Not until he leaves are we free to go to dinner."

Joseph was, however, so happy to have real work to do at last that he did not take the Chancellor's annoying habits very seriously. General Daun died in February 1766, so that, without friction, General Lacy was appointed as Daun's successor, but Joseph became the active and not only the nominal head of the army. At once, in his over-zealous sincerity, he reproached his officers for their haughty attitude towards the common soldiers. He was equally liberal-minded as his mother's representative as chief of the country's civil administration, and he introduced far-reaching if somewhat precipitate financial reforms.

He began by turning over the 22,000,000 florins which his father had left him to the State—that is to say, this sum was used to reduce the interest on the huge national debt from 6 to 4 per cent. He ruthlessly cut down the expenditures of the Court by dismissing a number of the unnecessary functionaries. He had

always hated hunting, and he was glad to have this excuse of selling his father's large and expensive hunting establishments. The wild boars, which Francis had kept in an animal park near Vienna, were systematically killed, and even the ladies of the Court took part in this last unsportsmanlike hunt. The members of the Imperial family, who usually quarrelled when they were together for any length of time, had always dined at separate tables, waited on by their own servants. To save money, Joseph ordered them to dine at one large table, and his unpopularity with his brother and sisters increased as the disharmony among them was stimulated.

Joseph's democratic tendencies caused him to open the famous Prater Park, which had been used only by the aristocracy, to the public. This made him extremely unpopular with many of his courtiers, but when they objected to sharing the Prater with mere commoners, Joseph bitingly remarked that " if he himself were to associate only with his equals, he would have to descend to the vault of the Capuchin Church (where the Habsburgs were buried) and to spend his days there."

The opening of the Prater did not please the people as much as Joseph had hoped it would, for many of his subjects had been disappointed when, instead of using his inheritance to reduce their taxes, the young Emperor had merely decreased the interest rate on the national debt.

After he had begun to organise economies at home, Joseph decided that the money Francis had left in Tuscany should be returned to Austria. Joseph wrote to Leopold, pointing out that as he himself had given his entire inheritance to the State, this Tuscan money, too, should be handed over.

As Tuscany was an extremely poor principality,

Joseph's demand was, of course, fantastic, and Leopold's ministers were firm in their refusal to grant the Emperor's request. Leopold tried tactfully to remonstrate with his brother, but Joseph wrote such sharp letters that a serious quarrel between the brothers seemed inevitable. Finally Maria Theresa was informed of their differences, and with Kaunitz's assistance she finally persuaded Joseph that he had been wrong. But this act, trivial in itself, finally roused Maria Theresa from her apathy.

She now listened with more interest to the aristocracy's bitter attacks against Joseph's democratic views and actions. She herself had frequently been in conflict with the nobility and the clergy, the privileged classes generally, but they had known that, at heart, she was a sincere and autocratic reactionary, who would always oppose any fundamental change of the existing order. The privileged classes were less sure of Joseph.

Maria Theresa again had the satisfying feeling that she was indispensable in the government of her country, and she returned to the world of politics. "I stupefy myself with work so that I have no time to feel or think," she wrote. Joseph's brief fling as a semi-independent ruler was over; he was now merely his mother's co-Regent.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

WITH the revival of her energies, Maria Theresa's grief became less poignant but more sentimental. Her loneliness was appalling, and subconsciously she began to dramatise herself as an unfortunate widow. After Francis's death, to the end of her life, she always wore black, and she never put on her jewels or other "female ornaments." She observed the anniversaries of Francis's death, of their marriage, of their betrothal, as though these had been saints' days laid down by the Church.

On these anniversaries this woman, who in her youth had gazed so persistently into the future, devoted herself to the past. She made a fetish of memories. On February 12, 1766, for instance, the thirtieth anniversary of her wedding day, she wrote to Countess Enzenberg:

"A year ago this date was the happiest day in the year. To-day it has been a comfort to me that the date coincided with Ash Wednesday, for ashes—that is my portion in life. I accept this fact with submission. I have spent the day of happy memories shut up in my private room alone, surrounded by portraits of our great and beloved master. As the hours passed my mind was busy with the thoughts of my vanished happiness. I bitterly regretted not having made more of this happiness while it lasted. Looking back, the thirty years of my marriage seem like ten, while the five months of my widowhood seem like twenty long years. To celebrate my anniversary, I plan to give away my wardrobe. The only garment I desire is the one I shall wear upon

my bier. It will signify my reunion with the sole object of passionate love that my heart has ever known. Think of the empty life I am now living. Surely God must intervene in my lot to provide for the needs of my soul. I need solitude for doing penance and for contemplating my eternal salvation. More than ever I long for my beloved Innsbruck. I believe that I might recover my spiritual peace in the town where I lost it."

Though Maria Theresa's old buoyancy never returned, and Francis's death was followed by so many family tragedies that her old optimism had little chance to revive, she never, of course, had any sincere intention of living a solitary life. She made a cult of her grief, and it is always difficult to know how much real emotion is felt by very sentimental people. It is also impossible to say whether Maria Theresa was ever quite honest enough with herself to admit, what her whole life proved, that she always loved the Habsburg dynasty, her Family, far more passionately than she had been attached to Francis.

Even while she remained in semi-retirement in her darkened, gloomy apartments, Maria Theresa had fully realised that Joseph might be refractory. Her ministers, her ladies-in-waiting, her other children had already complained to her of his active opposition to the existing order at the Court, and in her country. She herself once admitted to Marie Christine that " her unhappiness after her husband's death had made her hard," and she was always particularly relentless towards Joseph. She had no understanding whatsoever of Joseph's youthful enthusiasms, and it never occurred to her that with a little tact she might have curbed his wilfulness to a certain extent. Joseph, in turn, did not approach his mother diplomatically. Like the sons of many domineering women, he was bound to her by that painful

kind of attachment, which is a mixture of fear, love, and hatred. He resented his own persistent feeling for her, and in his efforts to assert himself he was sometimes unkind towards her.

He was far too honest ever to deny her outstanding achievements, but he frequently expressed contempt for the abilities of women as a whole. He hated " petticoat government," and after Isabella's death he never formed any lasting relationship. His affairs with women were casual, and in his courtesy towards them there was always an undertone of irony.

Joseph's personal bitterness always affected his political judgments. Perhaps it was this tendency which prevented him from becoming a really great man. James Bryce remarks in this connection that " few men have more narrowly missed greatness than Joseph II."

Even before Maria Theresa's and Joseph's fundamental differences became apparent, Joseph's personal grievance caused him almost brutally to attack the bureaucracy she had created and which was so dear to her heart. He pointed out to her that her own passion for detail had robbed her civil servants of any initiative they may, in the past, have possessed. Joseph was foolish in this attack against his mother's officials and ministers, for she was very lonely, and nothing would have persuaded her to dismiss any of her old servants whom she loved as old friends.

Both Maria Theresa and Joseph believed in a firm centralisation of the government authority in the Crown, but Joseph, who was a typical product of his more modern age, fervently advocated the rights of the common people. His mother feared and hated what she considered to be his dangerous radicalism, and he, in turn, had no patience whatsoever with her bigoted con-

servatism, her religious intolerance, her prudish attitude towards morality, her interference with individual liberty.

In Maria Theresa's struggle with her son, which, apart from short periods of regret on both sides, lasted until her death, both of the opponents were thoroughly unjust towards each other. She interpreted his sincere sympathy with the oppressed, his defence of those who were persecuted for their religion, as a personal affront to herself. She condemned his humanity as stupidity due to his lack of experience. Again and again she hurled the greatest insult of which she was capable at her son: she compared him with the person she most hated, with Frederick the Great. She called Joseph a "thoughtless imitator" of the King of Prussia, an "intellectual coquette" like "his hero."

Joseph, equally intolerant of her, did not appreciate that without becoming intolerant and relentless his mother could not have succeeded in saving the Habsburg dynasty from disintegration after his grandfather's death. Joseph never seemed to realise that she was a very lonely and pathetic woman, who was old beyond her years. He saw only her hardness and not the reasons for it. Exasperated, he often tried to argue with her, but, as he wrote to his brother Leopold, to whom he had become reconciled after their quarrel, "I have reasoned with her, I have analysed words and phrases, but it is in vain. It is like washing a negro white."

For decades every one, including Francis, had yielded to the Empress's wishes, and her courtiers were startled by her son's resistance to her. An enlightened French contemporary, who was in Vienna at the time, was amused to observe that factions, one supporting Joseph, the other loyal to the Empress, had developed at the Court. He ridiculed "the pious old

ladies," the "bigoted chastity commissioners," and the aristocrats, whose "privileges were dependent on the Empress," who were therefore on her side.

The aristocrats at the Court, whether they defended Maria Theresa's passionate attachment to the traditions of the existing order, or Joseph's desire for changes, had fully expected that Kaunitz would reconcile the Empress and her son. For many months, however, the Chancellor remained aloof from their quarrels, though it was generally believed that "in his heart he was on the young Emperor's side."

Kaunitz, who was an enlightened man, approved of many of Joseph's reforms, but the Count, who adored forms and traditions and who made decisions slowly, must have been deeply shocked by the young man's impetuosity. Besides, Kaunitz was as devoted to the Empress as he was capable of being devoted to any other person. The rows, for this is not too strong a word, which now disturbed his daily visits to the *Hofburg*, were painful to Kaunitz, who loathed uncomfortable situations.

In the middle of 1766 he therefore sent Maria Theresa his resignation. Naturally he did not mention his real reasons for wishing to retire. Instead, he said that his services would no longer be needed, as she had recalled Count Starhemberg from Paris to be his assistant in Vienna. Kaunitz preferred giving the impression that he was jealous of his colleague rather than alluding to the friction in Maria Theresa's household.

Maria Theresa absolutely refused to accept his resignation. She returned the document to him and sent him a letter which clearly showed that her diplomacy towards her political associates outside her own family was as persuasive as ever. She tactfully, and apparently quite casually, referred to Starhemberg as Kaunitz's

" pupil " ; she flattered the Chancellor, but not too much ; she assured him that his health was of extreme importance to her, that she would help him guard it. She did not refer to her disagreements with Joseph. In the end, Kaunitz agreed to remain at his post, but he made no effort to bring about more harmonious relations between Maria Theresa and her son.

By remaining at his post as her Chancellor, Kaunitz gave her his active support, but he did not try to prevent the spread of Joseph's radical ideas. He took no steps, for instance, to dissolve the groups of Freemasons which were being organised all over Austria, or to counteract the increasing popularity of anti-religious views. Kaunitz did not contradict Joseph's liberal opinions when the young Emperor frankly declared that he believed that no monarch " had the right to save people's souls in spite of themselves, or to coerce their conscience " ; that " temporal rulers had no right to interfere in their subjects' religion as long as they served the State and obeyed its laws."

Joseph never succeeded in persuading his mother to cease persecuting the Jews, and as late as 1777, three years before her death, she prohibited any Jew from living in Vienna without a special permit. She publicly branded the Jews as " a hypocritical, usurious race, which was influencing her people to become mendacious."

Though she told Joseph frequently that " religious toleration is the most ruinous thing in the world," that " it would be the greatest disaster that ever befell the Monarchy," he succeeded, by rousing public opinion, in somewhat improving the conditions of the Protestants. Protestant meetings, especially in Moravia, were often suppressed by Maria Theresa's troops, but the non-Catholic elements in the population were actively encouraged by Joseph's support.

The young Emperor was so enraged by his mother's religious intolerance that he did not care who knew about his quarrel with her, and he did not hesitate to write a frank letter to Choiseul about the Jesuits, whom Joseph called the " apostolic sibyls."

" I thank you for your confidence," he wrote to the French Foreign Minister. " If I were Regent, you could have my support. You have my complete approbation with regard to the Jesuits, and I approve of your plan for their suppression. You must not count on my mother; an attachment to this Order has become hereditary in the Habsburg family."

When later, on July 21, 1773, Pope Clement XIV. finally dissolved the Order, Joseph frankly rejoiced. The abolition of the Jesuits seemed to him almost a personal victory, and a reason to hope that education in Austria would one day become more enlightened and more democratic.

Apart from fighting for religious freedom, Joseph made a desperate effort to improve the conditions of the serfs, especially in Bohemia. Finally, after a struggle which lasted for ten years, the serfs were freed in 1775. In 1770 and 1771, when Central Europe was impoverished by poor harvests and floods, and the peasants revolted, the Empress blamed these rebellions on Joseph, who, so she said, had incited them by his " talk about the serfs' emancipation and their future religious liberty." She never forgave Joseph for helping to make these miserable serfs discontented. She had devoted her life to establishing order in her Empire, to putting everything and everybody neatly in its and his place, and the thought that these serfs should ever be taken out of their cog in the machine of State, out of their position of dependence on their feudal lords, appalled and terrified her. She

would not even consent to the abolishment of torture in Austrian prisons. Though she admitted that much could be said against torturing prisoners, she refused to do away with this medieval cruelty simply because " she was not keen about such great innovations."

Obviously Maria Theresa knew nothing of the modern movements of her age, of the ideas of human liberty which culminated twenty years later in the French Revolution. She never realised that Joseph, by his liberalism and the judicial reforms he introduced after her death, by gently bending the government authority to meet the needs and the demands of the times, may have prevented this authority from snapping. Without Joseph's reforms, Austria might, temporarily at least, have been unable to resist the influence of the French Revolution.

During the years he spent advocating the liberation of the serfs, his mother's obstinacy often made Joseph long to give up the fight. To escape from his mother, he became an inveterate traveller. Sometimes, when he was away from her, they were both tormented by regret because they had said such cruel things to each other. Then she would write him pathetic letters, reminding him that she was an old woman " whose abilities, hearing, and sight were declining " ; she would rouse his pity when she admitted that she " belonged to an earlier century and that she could not understand even the jargon of the new age." She would assure him that, no matter what she may have said to him in moments of anger, she did realise that he loved his country. She begged him to " help a mother who is lonely, and who will die when she sees all her efforts and sorrows gone to waste."

Joseph, like many cynics, was sentimental at heart, and his mother's appeals moved him deeply. He had once called his father " an idler surrounded by flatterers,"

but when Francis died, he had been sadly lamented by his son. Now, when he received a doleful letter from his mother, Joseph's childhood affection for her revived poignantly; he was torn between his pity for her and his feeling of responsibility towards his country. Several times, in despair, he implored her to allow him to resign from his post as co-Regent. "If you would only release me, everything would be better and simpler," he once assured her, "and I should be happier and more at peace, and perhaps more useful than I am now."

Maria Theresa would not allow her son to resign, but his suggestion had seriously alarmed her, and she tried to be less emotional in her dealings with him. In her answer to him, she expressed in a few words why his liberal views had hurt her so deeply. "You show too much antipathy for old traditions," she wrote, "especially for the traditions of the clergy, and you are too free in your views of morals and conduct. This causes me to feel a justified alarm for your position, and makes me tremble with fear when I contemplate the future."

Maria Theresa's recurrent attempts to reconcile her son were thwarted by equally recurrent outbursts of temper. From Francis's death until her own, fifteen years later, her agitating relationship with her son embittered her life. She never awoke in the morning without feeling that the day might bring resentments and regrets; she never retired without being conscious of the disharmony which was disrupting her home. Whenever she and Joseph were temporarily drawn together during these unhappy years, it was by a family sorrow, or a national calamity.

Maria Theresa was as conservative in her views about science as she was in her attitude towards political

reform. Joseph had always resented his mother's narrow-minded attitude towards the new method of inoculation against small-pox. Had she allowed these experiments to be made earlier, he once lamented, "I might not now be sorrowing for the wife who was the joy of my existence."

It had frequently been suggested to the Empress at least to try the inoculation, which Lady Mary Wortley Montague had studied in Turkey and which she first introduced into England about 1717. Dr. Edward Jenner did not make his first scientific experiments in vaccination until 1796, but Lady Mary's method of inoculating healthy people with material from others suffering mild forms of the disease had been practised with success in England for several decades. The Empress had been told about this method of inoculation, but she had not encouraged it in Austria. It was not until after the ghastly epidemic of 1767 that she became more open-minded on the subject. This year, during which Maria Theresa had hoped to celebrate her fiftieth birthday with national rejoicing, was a terrible one for the Empress. Marie Christine, who was now married to her Albert of Saxony, gave birth to a child which, tragically enough, lived only for a few hours. Marie Christine did not catch small-pox, but her husband very nearly died of the disease. The Archduchess Elisabeth, Maria Theresa's most beautiful daughter, who had cared for nothing but her own beauty, recovered from the scourge, but she was terribly disfigured by pock marks for life. Josepha, Maria Theresa's sixteen-year-old daughter, who was to marry the King of Naples, Charles III. of Spain's second son, died of small-pox in the autumn; and Joseph's wife, Josepha, to whom, until the end, he refused even the poor comfort of occasional letters, died early in May.

Throughout her life Maria Theresa had been terrified of small-pox, it had been one of the most persistent fears of her life; but the almost unbearable remorse she felt because she had insisted on this marriage, which had proved such a terrible fiasco, caused her to remain at Josepha's bedside.

During the last days of the unfortunate girl's life, when she was rarely conscious, Maria Theresa made pathetic attempts to give her the tenderness, the expression of affection, which she had never known since she came to Vienna. The physicians in attendance could not dissuade the Empress from caressing her lonely daughter-in-law. Josepha, Archduchess of Austria, and Holy Roman Empress was, however, destined to die without the comforting touch of another human being, for the day before her death, on May 28, her mother-in-law, who had exposed herself so constantly to infection, showed the first symptoms of the disease.

Maria Theresa was very ill. On June 1 the last sacrament was administered, but she finally recovered. She herself did not cling to life. Perhaps, in that awareness which comes when a human being is so close to death, she felt that, as her conflict with Joseph showed, she had outlived her own age, and that she would never understand the new era. Had she died in 1767, at the age of fifty, her life and her work would have been well rounded and complete. And she herself would have been spared the unhappiness of knowing that, from her point of view, Joseph would destroy her achievements. Besides, she would not have experienced the many tragedies which were to befall her family while she lived on for thirteen years.

After her attack of small-pox, Maria Theresa was

physically and mentally an old woman. The scars which the disease had left behind had disfigured her face, and she was now so stout that she could not move about quickly. Her eyesight had been affected, and she suffered from rheumatism. She once complained, in a letter to her son Ferdinand, that her physical disabilities "made it impossible for her to enjoy even a moment of comfort; and her sorrows completed her misery."

She made a tremendous effort to continue her usual routine, for she believed that "she must observe regular hours." She often arose at four to attend to her voluminous correspondence with her absent children, and unless she was ill, she punctually received her ministers and foreign ambassadors. She spent most of the time not taken up by political duties in prayers and devotions. "Incredible as such a fact may appear," Wraxall records, "it is indisputably true that the Empress spends more than five hours on her religious devotions." She sometimes remained on her knees for three hours in the royal chapel.

She moved slowly, for her inherited tendency to dropsy had developed and she was obliged to wear gaiters to support her limbs. Her black widow's cap hid the upper part of her face, and she was so short-sighted that she used a magnifying-glass to look at even largish objects. Despite her frailty, she stubbornly, as in her youth, kept her windows open even during the winter. She once grudgingly promised Ferdinand, during the cold winter of 1773, that she would close them when she sat writing at her desk, but that "when she received visitors in audience she would continue her traditional custom of leaving them wide open."

Her rigid self-discipline seemed to comfort her. Apart from Ferdinand, who was happily married to

Beatrix of Modena; Marie Christine, whose husband was now the Palatine of Hungary; and Maximilian, who took Holy Orders, her children were a source of constant anxiety to her. "Formerly my children were my joy," she confessed to her old friend Countess Edling, "but now they cause me worry and sorrow."

For the moment she was particularly concerned with finding suitable husbands for her unmarried daughters, and by suitable, of course, she meant politically useful husbands. Besides, she was uneasy about her daughters' financial position. Francis had not made provision for any of his children except Joseph, and their mother wondered quite rightly who would support them in their old age. For she was fully aware that Joseph disliked his brothers and sisters—with the exception of Leopold—quite as heartily as they disliked him and each other. In her letters Maria Theresa tended to stimulate their mutual distrust by complaining of one to the other.

The Empress frequently complained to her older children about her two younger daughters, Caroline and Amalia, whom she married off in 1768 and 1769. The Archduchess Caroline, who was only fifteen, took her dead sister Josepha's place and married King Ferdinand IV. of Naples. As "dear Queen Caroline" she played a part in the biography of Nelson's Lady Hamilton. Maria Theresa was really angry when she heard that Caroline cried and screamed in rage and despair when she and her retinue crossed the Neapolitan border. Caroline did not want to marry a stranger, she was home-sick, and the first months she spent in Naples were a nightmare for her. Her mother's representatives in Naples had been instructed to report to Vienna on her behaviour, and the child was tormented by Maria Theresa's severe letters. Phrases such as

"your voice is unpleasant enough as it is, even if you do not raise it," must have crushed the girl completely.

Maria Theresa had hardened to such an extent that even her daughter's heart-breaking letter, written shortly after her first contact with married life, did not soften the Empress. "Life is a martyrdom," Caroline had written, "and it is all the more difficult as one must pretend to be contented. I now know what marriage is, and I have a deep pity for Antoinette, who has yet to experience marriage. I admit frankly that I would rather die than be forced to experience again what I have gone through. If I had not been taught by my religion to think of God, I should have killed myself, for it was hell to live like that for a week. I shall weep bitterly if ever my sister is in the same situation. . . ."

Caroline's anguish did not prevent Maria Theresa from arranging an equally unhappy marriage for Amalia in the following year. She had been in love with a quiet young man, Duke Charles of Zweibrücken, and she implored her mother to let her marry him. She thought that she, too, like her sister Marie Christine, should be allowed to choose her own husband. But Amalia was not as strong as her sister, and she was forced to yield to her mother's wishes. In 1769 she was married by proxy to Duke Ferdinand of Parma. Amalia was twenty-two, while Ferdinand, obviously a case of arrested development, was only seventeen and still loved toys and games. Amalia's reactions to her unsatisfying marital relationship were like her sister Marie Antoinette's. Amalia became frivolous, she craved constant amusements, and she was passionately fond of political intrigues.

At first Maria Theresa merely scolded Amalia by letter. She pointed out to her daughter that a woman's job was to "devote herself to her husband," that she had no right

to be interested in politics, as the Court at Versailles was becoming distinctly annoyed at Amalia's intrigues against Tillot, Ferdinand of Parma's chief minister.

Amalia ignored her mother's advice, though Maria Theresa tried to frighten her by telling her that "she was being constantly watched" by her private spies in Parma. Finally in disgust and to appease Versailles, Maria Theresa disowned Amalia. She no longer wrote to her, and she would not allow any of her other children to communicate with this unruly sister. Maria Theresa thought that Amalia would be distressed by this severity. The Empress's lack of imagination probably spared her great unhappiness, for she did not realise that Amalia was probably relieved when her mother's severe and tedious letters ceased to arrive.

Maria Theresa herself was now less interested in Amalia and Caroline than she was in Marie Antoinette, for she hoped that this child would be the means of fulfilling her mother's greatest desire, a union between the Bourbons and the Habsburgs. There had at one time been a vague suggestion that Joseph should marry one of Louis XV.'s rather unattractive daughters. Had he been willing to do so, Marie Antoinette would probably have remained as anonymous in history as most of Maria Theresa's other daughters.

As early as 1766, when Marie Antoinette was eleven years old, her marriage with the Dauphin was being seriously considered, and Starhemberg wrote to Maria Theresa from Paris that Louis XV. approved of this union and that "the matter could be considered as good as settled." In the spring of 1766, the betrothal was formally arranged; in 1768, a French priest, the Abbé Vermond, was summoned to Vienna to give the little girl a French education; and on Easter Sunday, 1770,

the French Ambassador in Vienna came to fetch her. Marie Antoinette, then a frightened child of fifteen, left Austria on April 21. She was weighed down by her mother's admonitions about the tremendous responsibilities she would assume in Versailles, and she carried away with her the Empress's famous *Réglement à lire tous les mois*, in which Maria Theresa laid down the rules for her future behaviour.

Politically, the Empress was satisfied. She was sure that this marriage was the crowning act of the policy she and Kaunitz had defended in seven sanguinary years of war, and in decades of a troubled peace. Nothing, so Marie Theresa was convinced, could now come between the Bourbons and the Habsburgs. Together they would, one day, dominate Europe. It never occurred to Maria Theresa that the power of both the Habsburgs and the Bourbons would diminish, that forces outside the control of royal dynasties were gathering strength in Europe. Maria Theresa would have thought any one mad who intimated that perhaps the common people would end this alliance between the two ruling houses by destroying the Bourbons.

Maria Theresa, who had always been a robust and healthy woman in her sexual relationship with her husband, could not possibly have imagined, furthermore, that she was sending her youngest daughter into an unnatural marital relationship; that for seven years, until her husband underwent an operation, Marie Antoinette's marriage would not be consummated and she would have no children.

Amalia's and Caroline's miserable marriages may have made Maria Theresa vaguely anxious about the future of her youngest daughter, but if the Empress was troubled she did not show it. Marie Antoinette's personal happiness or unhappiness did not matter to

her mother as long as she dutifully performed the historic political function which had been assigned to her. It grieved Maria Theresa to part from her youngest daughter, this child to whom Francis had always been particularly devoted, but she had learned to accept these separations from her children as a duty to her country.

Words cannot describe Maria Theresa's loneliness at this time. Joseph's daughter Theresa, "his one joy and relaxation," the one creature who bound him to his home, died of pneumonia two months before Marie Antoinette's magnificent and sad departure for Paris. Maria Theresa's affections had been centred on this child, and bitterness was added to her sorrow when, in whispers loud enough for the Empress to hear, it was said at the Court that her granddaughter had caught the fatal cold in the Empress's chilly apartments.

After his child's death, Joseph grew curiously inhuman. And there exists a little letter from young Theresa, written to Louis XV. of France, after she had been inoculated against small-pox, which shows that she must have been a most attractive child. "Knowing that you love me, dear grandpapa, I assure you that I am surprisingly well. I had only fifty pock marks, which give me great pleasure."

The *Hofburg* was a desolate place without little Theresa and young Marie Antoinette. The Empress's two daughters who remained at home were depressing companions. Marianne, whom her mother had appointed as the Abbess of a convent in Prague, was never in good health, and Elisabeth, who had lived only for her beauty, was embittered and spiteful after she was disfigured by small-pox. Her brother Joseph once said of her that she "made a pointed arrow out of every harmless piece of wood." She never became resigned to the

fact that she, who had once been so beautiful, should be doomed to the lonely life of a spinster. In her youth, brilliant marriages had been planned for her. The King of Poland had been one of her suitors, and after Marie Lescynska's death, there had been some talk of marrying her to that terrible old man, Louis XV. of France. Now Elisabeth had to be content with the honorary and tiresome post as head of the religious institution for aged women which Maria Theresa had founded in Innsbruck. The function of these women was to pray daily for the peace of the late Emperor Francis's soul.

Later, after Maria Theresa's death, Joseph at once sent these two sisters to the religious institutions of which heretofore they had been only the official heads, but while the Empress lived her two unmarried daughters cast a continuous gloom on the palace. They constantly quarrelled with each other, and Maria Theresa did not think it unusual when, as she once wrote to Ferdinand, Elisabeth had been so angry with the world at large that she refused to speak to any one for thirty hours.

"Immured in the Imperial Palace," an English visitor to Vienna described the "gloomy and tedious life" of Elisabeth and Marianne: "almost destitute of society, obliged to attend their mother wherever she moves, and compelled to assist at ceremonies or exercises of devotion, as if they were nuns rather than Princesses; scarcely are they known to exist by any of the foreign nations of Europe, and never were any persons less objects of envy."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE gloom which settled down permanently upon Maria Thereas's private life did not make her inactive politically. On the contrary, she devoted herself all the more tenaciously and passionately to affairs of State. Poland, which has never ceased being a bone of contention in Europe, was at this time her chief cause for anxiety. After the death of Augustus III. of Poland and of his son Christian Frederick in 1763, Maria Theresa, who was deeply attached to his widow, tried in vain to secure the throne of Poland for the House of Saxony. She put forward the claims of Augustus's younger sons Xavier and Augustus. The Polish throne was not, however, passed on automatically from father to son. Instead, after the death of a ruler, the new King was elected by the aristocracy. These elections never occurred without sanguinary struggles. The Polish nobles, each ruling supreme over vast estates, were divided into bitterly antagonistic factions, and they had not been able to agree on Augustus's successor. They all, however, opposed Maria Theresa's Saxon candidate.

It looked as though the Polish crisis would develop into a far-reaching European conflict, for each Great Power wanted to gain control of this country, which for so long had been a buffer state between Russia and Prussia. Catherine the Great was determined to put her favourite Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski on this throne, thus gradually absorbing Poland into Russia. Frederick the Great, of course, did not enjoy the prospect

of having his powerful rival expand her territories, or of having a Polish province as his immediate neighbour. Maria Theresa, for once agreeing with her arch-enemy, was equally unwilling to see Russia's power increased in this manner, and France was giving financial assistance to those Polish aristocrats who were opposing Poniatowski with armed force.

One group of Polish nobles had sent representatives to Berlin to offer Prince Henry, Frederick's brother, the coveted throne, but Frederick decided that it would be unwise to antagonise Catherine by accepting. Henry therefore refused the offer, and Frederick promised Catherine that he would support her candidate Poniatowski. Frederick as yet said nothing about a possible partition of Poland, a partition in which he would be given a share. For the moment, in 1764, he was satisfied in signing a treaty with Catherine in which they promised each other mutual support in case of dangerous Polish disturbances.

Many Polish aristocrats, who objected to Poniatowski, intrigued against their new King for some years, and in 1768 the discontent of the patriotic Catholic nobles, united in the so-called Confederation of Bar, became articulate. They openly rebelled against Poniatowski. The insurgents were defeated by Catherine, and some of them fled to northern Turkey. The Russians, following in pursuit, rashly attacked several Turkish villages. As a result, the Sultan, Mustofa III., was furious, and a war broke out between Turkey and Russia. "You will be astonished to learn," Frederick wrote to Voltaire, "that a war is being waged in Europe in which I am not taking part."

This Turkish-Russian War was merely one of many stages in Russia's systematic attempt to gain an

approach to the Black Sea and the Crimea. After decades of effort, by the Peace of Kainardji in 1774, Catherine finally succeeded in realising this ambition.

The European outlook was none too favourable for Austria. Catherine's victories over the Turks made it seem probable that she would eventually annex Turkish territory as well as Poland, and it was obvious that the Austrian provinces near the Turkish frontier would be her next temptation. The thought that parts of her Empire were coveted by the Russians, that Frederick might join Catherine, made Maria Theresa feel distinctly uncomfortable. Her hatred of Frederick had not abated with the years, nor did she hope to reconquer Silesia, but she decided that it was now politically imperative to establish more friendly relations with the King of Prussia. Maria Theresa realised that in view of Catherine's obvious rise to power, it would be wiser to win Frederick as a friend. Then in case this should prove necessary in the future, Prussia and Austria would be ready to join forces against Russia.

Joseph was dissatisfied with his mother's policy of watchful waiting, with her inclination merely to protect the territories which were already hers. He seemed to overlook the difficulties of the European situation, and he thought that if he acted quickly, Austria might acquire new provinces while the general uncertainty prevailed. On this occasion Joseph lived up to a remark once made about him by the King of Prussia. Frederick had said that "unfortunately for himself, Joseph is a young man who always takes the second step before he takes the first."

Joseph suggested to his mother that instead of bringing about a vague and platonic friendship with Frederick it would be advantageous to Austria to form an active alliance with Prussia, and then to attack

Russia while Catherine was busy defeating the Turks. Such a war against Russia, Joseph argued, would place the Turks under an obligation to Austria. In return for these services Turkey would have to make territorial concessions to Austria.

Joseph urged his mother to prepare for war secretly, so that even Frederick, whom he counted on as a potential ally, would not know their intentions until it was time to strike. Above all, so the young Emperor suggested, Russia was to believe that Austria was arming to support her in the Russo-Turkish War. Catherine was to be taken completely unawares; she was to trust Maria Theresa's friendship until the Austrian armies actually attacked the Russians.

Maria Theresa was more grieved than angered by her son's Machiavellian plan. She herself was too exhausted by life to face another war, years of uncertainty, of being forced to make decisions. She felt herself unequal to this task.

Her advisers were astonished by the aversion to war reflected in her answer to Joseph's memorandum. Perhaps she would have felt it her duty to drag her country into another war if the gains to be derived from it had been certain, or if the safety of her Empire had been involved. As it was, she absolutely refused to disturb her own peace of mind, to risk the security of her people in an adventurous war of conquest, and in this she differed markedly from other European rulers.

"At my age," she wrote to Joseph, "one considers things more carefully than one does at yours. The terrible wars I was forced to wage taught me to fear war. . . . My fears confirm the instincts of my heart and guide the signature of my hand. I desire peace, and no hopes for future gains will weaken my resolve."

Apart from Maria Theresa's horror of another war,

she was deeply shocked by the slyness of her son's proposals. It was obvious that, subconsciously at least, she had never felt quite easy about her own duplicity during the years when she had pretended that England was her dear ally while, actually, she had been working towards the alliance with France. Now she was outraged by Joseph's suggestion to attack Catherine of Russia without warning her. Maria Theresa's letter to her son is ponderous with self-righteousness. Perhaps by obeying her conscience as an old woman, she hoped to atone for her diplomatic dishonesty of the past.

"I should never agree to your plan," she wrote severely to Joseph; "it is against my principles. I would not approve of deceiving the King of Prussia any more than I would agree to the war you suggest against Russia. It has always been my policy, for which I am indebted to Prince Kaunitz, to be honest and frank; I will not tolerate duplicity, and I must reject any proposals which would mislead others."

Kaunitz, this "wily Chancellor," as many historians have called him, was confronted by a serious problem when he read Joseph's memorandum. Naturally, Kaunitz had no scruples about deceiving Catherine of Russia if this seemed expedient, but he could not, without offending the Empress, express his surprise at her sudden high standard of morals in international affairs. He could not afford to annoy her, and yet Joseph, his future sovereign, must be handled tactfully. Kaunitz therefore appeased them both. He did not uncompromisingly reject the Emperor's scheme. He merely told Joseph that for the present it would be most unwise to wage a war against Russia. He satisfied Maria Theresa by supporting her suggestion that more friendly relations should be maintained with Frederick of Prussia.

Frederick, who had undoubtedly heard from his secret agents in Vienna that an Austrian *rapprochement* to Prussia was imminent, was waiting for more definite developments. He was accustomed to the notorious Austrian *phlegm*, the inability of his Austrian neighbours to make up their minds quickly, and during the Seven Years War he had profited by this weakness, but now it was difficult for him to curb his impatience. For Frederick was fully aware of the instability of his international relations; he knew that alliances or plans for future alliances are often changed over-night, and that, instead of going against Russia, Austria might suddenly join Catherine and attack Prussia.

For many months Frederick had been trying to arrange a meeting with Joseph in order to win the young man's support. They finally met on August 25, 1769, at Neisse, a town in Silesia. Despite their great difference in age—Frederick was fifty-seven, and Joseph twenty-eight—there was a curious resemblance in the characters of these two men, in their cynical approach to the political purpose which had brought them together, in their suspicions of each other. Joseph died before he was fifty, and he was by no means as brilliant as Frederick, but had he lived, he might, as an old man, have been like this bitter and disillusioned Prussian who, at Neisse, wore an Austrian uniform in honour of his guest.

This meeting was a success, for it brought about the temporary reconciliation between Austria and Prussia. Frederick was able, furthermore, to interest Joseph in the possibility of a future partition of Poland, which seemed to Frederick the only ultimate solution of the Polish problem.

From a human point of view Frederick was highly entertained by this meeting. Joseph was too shrewd to

allow his tremendous admiration for his host to obscure his judgment of him. "The man is a genius," Joseph wrote to Maria Theresa; "he is a marvellous talker, but every observation he makes reflects the fact that he is a rascal."

In their long conversations about politics, literature, and private affairs, "we jumped from branch to branch," Joseph expressed it—Frederick even asked the young man about his late father's mistress, the Princess Auersperg. Joseph answered all the King's questions with apparent frankness, and he was sure that his gracious manner was successfully concealing his mistrust of Frederick. The King of Prussia, however, was too experienced to be taken in by the young man's courtesy. Frederick was amused "by Joseph's affected frankness, which suited him well."

On the whole, after their first meeting Frederick underestimated Joseph's ability. Though he admitted that "Joseph was the best Emperor Germany had known for a long time," Frederick believed that "Joseph's exalted position had made him superficial," and that "though he was desirous of learning he lacked the patience to instruct himself." When Frederick and Joseph met for the second time, a year later, the former revised his opinion. "Though the Emperor was brought up in a bigoted Court," Frederick wrote to Voltaire, "he has overcome superstition. He was brought up in splendour, but he adopted simple manners. He is modest, though he was surrounded with adulation. He is eager for glory, but he sacrifices his ambitions to filial duties."

Maria Theresa did not care in the least what Frederick thought of her son, but knowing and exaggerating Joseph's admiration for the King of Prussia, she had been afraid that the younger man would be unduly influenced. She had feared that Frederick's well-known

atheism might affect Joseph, and that he might fall into a trap which the wicked Frederick would undoubtedly set for him. She was therefore greatly relieved to learn from Joseph's letters that he did not trust the King of Prussia. She was annoyed when she was later informed that Joseph had arranged for a second meeting with Frederick, and this time she instructed Kaunitz to accompany the Emperor. Above all, so she instructed her Chancellor, nothing was to be said to Frederick which would in any way endanger the existing Franco-Austrian alliance.

The second discussions between Frederick and the Austrians occurred a year later, in Neustadt, in Moravia, early in September 1770. On this occasion Kaunitz was the prominent member of the Austrian delegation. He believed that the Turkish defeats in the summer of 1770 made it necessary to ask Frederick more definite questions about Prussia's plans in connection with the Russian-Turkish War. For Austria's attitude would be largely determined by Frederick's intentions. The question of Poland, too, was brought up in no uncertain terms by the Austrian Chancellor.

Though the situation was somewhat clarified by Kaunitz's meeting with Frederick, no definite conclusions were reached at Neustadt, chiefly because Kaunitz showed a surprising lack of tact in his dealings with the King. The Austrian Chancellor, who deservedly had the reputation of being one of the cleverest negotiators in Europe, had met his equal in Frederick. The two men had never met before, and Kaunitz, accustomed to dealing with Maria Theresa, who was always more direct than subtle, did not appreciate Frederick's cleverness.

Kaunitz had prepared a " Political Catechism " dealing with the European situation. When he was pre-

sented to the King of Prussia he did not wait to see what turn the conversation would take. Instead, the Chancellor took Frederick aside and lectured him for several hours from this Catechism. As Frederick had no particular desire to interrupt, for this made it unnecessary for him to commit himself, Kaunitz believed that he had made a profound impression on Frederick. In fact, Kaunitz wrote to Maria Theresa saying that "his conversation had made a most vivid impression upon the King of Prussia."

Frederick was amused and yet astonished by this famous diplomat's lack of judgment. "Kaunitz," he wrote to his Ambassador in Vienna, "considers me only a soldier who has no conception of politics. I cannot deny that he has amused me considerably."

By the time Kaunitz returned to Vienna, pleased with his imaginary success at Neustadt, Catherine's victorious campaign had brought the Russian armies very close to Austria's frontiers. The Chancellor realised that something more drastic than amicable conversations must be arranged. Maria Theresa continued to resist the suggestion of war, but Kaunitz and Joseph finally persuaded her to mobilise her armies and to be prepared for the possibility of a Russian invasion. Kaunitz pointed out to her that the news of Austrian preparedness would restrain Catherine and Frederick and prevent them from becoming too aggressive.

Kaunitz, who now sided more openly with Joseph, also told Maria Theresa that it would benefit Austria to act as Turkey's official mediator when the peace with Russia was finally concluded. As a reward for these services, Kaunitz proposed to ask Turkey to cede Wallachia to Austria. Maria Theresa hated these suggestions; but for the first time in her life she was unable

to accept or reject them at once, to make quick decisions. "I wish I could keep out of the whole affair," she wrote to Count Mercy in Paris; "let the Russians negotiate directly with the poor devils."

"Her Majesty," Joseph wrote irritably to his brother Leopold, "is defeated in great and important decisions by her own indecisive mood."

Joseph, who knew that the situation was extremely critical for Austria, and that something must be done at once, lost his patience with his mother. He did not stop to think that her own sudden inability to act promptly was, for her, a terrible tragedy. Her powers of decision seemed paralysed; she realised that she was being as dilatory as many of her generals had been during the Seven Years War. It was not until July 1771 that she at last consented to sign a Convention with Turkey, in which she pledged herself to help the Sultan obtain acceptable peace terms. In order to curtail Russia's power, which might become increasingly dangerous for Austria as well as for Turkey, she also promised in this Convention to protect Poland against Russian domination.

Pathetically enough, as far as Maria Theresa was concerned, this Convention had become meaningless by the time it was signed. For Frederick, too, could not afford to allow Russia to expand too far towards the south, and he now frankly discussed his idea of "diverting Russia's appetite for Turkey into another channel: Poland."

Early in 1771, he had signed a secret Treaty with Catherine; they had agreed to partition Poland as it suited their convenience. When Maria Theresa heard about this Treaty she realised that she could not sit back calmly and watch Prussia and Russia increase their influence at Poland's and Turkey's expense. Obviously,

as S. K. Padover points out, "Austria had only two choices left: either to engage in a war, or to join in a dismemberment of Turkey or of Poland." The thought of another war was more intolerable to Maria Theresa than ever, and if she participated in the partition of Poland, she would be forced, dishonourably, to repudiate her Convention with Turkey.

On February 19, 1772, while Maria Theresa was experiencing a tormenting conflict with her conscience, Frederick of Prussia and Catherine of Russia, who were not troubled by scruples and always "sinned boldly," as Martin Luther once expressed this type of courage, signed a Treaty partitioning Poland. In this First Partition of Poland Russia was to receive north-eastern Poland, Frederick the district known as west Prussia, while Austria was to be given the fertile southern districts of Galicia and Lodomeria. Taking no notice of Maria Theresa's pangs of conscience, Frederick and Catherine then simply sent her the Treaty for her signature.

The disgust Maria Theresa felt when she signed her name to this disgraceful Treaty was shown on the document itself. In the passage dealing with the "legitimate" (*rechtmässig*) claims which the three countries had to these Polish territories, Maria Theresa firmly struck out the word "legitimate." During the months before she signed the Treaty, her memoranda to Joseph and to Kaunitz, her letters to her own children and to her son-in-law Albert of Saxony, are full of unhappy comments on the Partition of Poland, "this source of future political evil," as she prophetically called it. She had tried in vain to extricate herself from a political position which forced her either to plunge her country into war and endanger her dynasty and her empire, or to accept this Treaty.

"I am so utterly depressed by our critical situation," she had written to Joseph, "that day and night I can think of nothing else in my efforts to find a remedy." And to Kaunitz, she had written in her helplessness: "Let us abandon as evil and pernicious the idea of fishing for gains in the existing political whirlpool. Let us consider by what means we can extricate ourselves from our deplorable situation without hoping for territorial gains. Instead of this, we should try to re-establish our prestige, our reputation for honesty and, as far as possible, we should make an effort also to re-establish the political balance of power in Europe."

Maria Theresa never ceased reproaching herself for being a signatory to this first Partition of Poland. It did not comfort her to remember that this partition—unwise and dishonourable as it was—was at the time inevitable from a political point of view. She felt that she had sinned as a monarch and as a Christian, that she had failed in her sacred mission to uphold the integrity of the Habsburg dynasty. "A ruler," she wrote, harshly condemning herself, "has no greater rights than a private individual," and to her the Partition of Poland was a common theft.

God, she was sure, was frowning upon her. She emphasised again and again that when she had defended her own lands at the beginning of her reign, "He had been on her side," but that now "she was ashamed to be seen in public." The depression which had haunted her since Francis's death had turned into miserable despair. She often felt that she could not go on. She "could find no peace" as she herself expressed it, "and her conscience did not cease reproaching her."

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

MARIA THERESA was to experience one more bitter struggle with Frederick of Prussia, a struggle which involved a last hopeless conflict with her son Joseph. On December 31, 1777, Elector Maximilian Joseph of Bavaria died, leaving no children. He was the last of the Bavarian line of Wittelsbach. His acknowledged heir was Elector Charles Theodore of the Palatinate, a man older than Maximilian Joseph, who was also childless.

After Maximilian Joseph's death, other German princes glanced greedily at Bavaria. Joseph, too, was not averse to increasing his territories, and Kaunitz, several years before, had prepared a memorandum proving Austria's legal rights to this south German Electorate. The ruling families of Central Europe were so intermarried that it was easy for any of them to put forward hereditary claims. Apart from mentioning how closely the ruling Habsburgs had been related to the Bavarian House, Kaunitz contended that certain Bavarian provinces were actually imperial fiefs, which should return to the Habsburg Crown. He asserted, for instance, that the Upper Palatinate belonged to Austria, because it had once been left to the rulers of Bohemia, whoever these rulers might be.

Early in 1777, when it was obvious that Maximilian Joseph could not live very much longer, Charles Theodore of the Palatinate, his heir, who was afraid of the undue interest taken in his inheritance by other rulers,

especially Frederick of Prussia, appealed to Joseph as the Holy Roman Emperor to protect his rights. Charles Theodore was then shocked to discover that Joseph, instead of being his protector, was himself coveting sections of Bavaria after the Elector's death.

On January 1, 1778, Joseph sent a memorandum to Kaunitz, saying that he had just heard of the Elector's death. "As there is no time to study the situation more closely," the Emperor wrote, "it is my idea that we take possession of Lower Bavaria at once. I advise you to say nothing of all this to Her Majesty, as this would spoil her pleasure in the New Year's festivities."

Obviously Joseph was fully aware of his mother's growing aversion to international intrigue, of her constant fear that somehow or other her country might be plunged into another war. To avoid an unpleasant scene with her, and to get his own way, Joseph had decided to take matters into his own hands and without consulting her.

The Emperor had, however, underestimated his mother's shrewdness. Though it was difficult for her to make decisions, her mind was as alert as ever. She knew that the Elector's death would stimulate Joseph to some action, and she very soon found out what were his intentions.

"Even if our claims to Bavaria were really justified," she wrote severely to her son, "we should hesitate to start an international conflagration. . . . I would not object to asserting our claims in a peaceful manner, and with decency, but I refuse to take up arms. . . ."

In her long conversations with Joseph, in which with the help of accurate statistics she pointed out to him the relative weakness of the Austrian armies, it became apparent that she was no longer able to hold her own

against her son's determination. He had become the dominating factor in their relationship, and despite his overwhelming desire to conquer a part of Bavaria, Joseph must have been painfully impressed by his mother's lack of resistance. This woman, who had once commanded, now implored him to desist from a war. If hostilities were to begin, she assured him somewhat hysterically, the shock would kill her.

"If you insist on beginning this war," she told him with sad resignation, "I shall go to the Tirol and end my days in retirement, so that I can weep quietly about the unhappy destiny of my Family and my people, and await a Christian death."

Joseph would not allow himself to be moved by his mother's despair. By the middle of January he wrote to his brother Leopold that he had definitely decided to occupy Lower Bavaria with his troops. By January 16 he had done so. Then, with his armed forces behind him, he began to negotiate with Charles Theodore of the Palatinate.

Incredible as this seems, Joseph and Kaunitz apparently believed that Frederick of Prussia would stand aloof from this conflict with Bavaria. Kaunitz repressed any anxiety he may have felt concerning Frederick's interest in the war. Actually, of course, Frederick had no intention of remaining a spectator, thus allowing Joseph to expand his territories.

On February 6, Frederick's first note reached Vienna. He demanded to know what all this trouble in Bavaria was about. His second note, dated March 9, was more peremptory. He practically commanded Joseph to evacuate Lower Bavaria at once. One wonders whether, in his anger, Joseph appreciated the historical significance of this demand. The ruler of one of the

German electorate states was giving orders to the Holy Roman Emperor. The balance of power in Germany was changing rapidly in favour of Prussia.

By this time, when the armies were already in Bavaria and it was really too late to prevent the war, Maria Theresa roused herself to a more active opposition of Joseph's plans. "I shall no longer agree to act against my conscience and my judgment," she wrote to her son firmly; and then more gently, she added, "Let us conclude the peace, my dear Joseph; be the true father of your peoples."

Until the end, the Empress was more realistic than her son. His undue optimism exasperated her during this crisis. She tried to make him understand the weakness of Austria's position. In a war which would inevitably involve all of Europe, Prussia would be supported by her ally, Russia, whereas France, Austria's ally, would not be so dependable. Joseph had been in Paris the year before to see his sister Marie Antoinette, but Maria Theresa had no illusions about this visit; she did not believe that it could have brought about any marked improvement in her relations with France.

Apart from the fact that France was actively concerned with the revolt of the English colonies in America, and was preparing to go to war against England, it was known that Vergennes, the French Foreign Minister, had always been antagonistic to the alliance with Austria. Even if his country had not been on the verge of a war with England, and thus occupied, Austria could not have counted on the support of France. Maria Theresa guessed, furthermore, that Frederick was probably stimulating Vergennes' dislike of Austria. She was right, for he had indeed instructed Baron Goltz, his Ambassador in Paris, to emphasise at the French

Court Joseph's " underhand ambitions," to tell Vergennes that the Emperor's obvious love of conquest might prompt him to revive his ancient claims to Silesia, Belgrade, or Alsace.

Maria Theresa warned Joseph against being too hopeful about their French ally, and her letters to Marie Antoinette reflect her own clear grasp of the situation. " For thirty-seven years the King of Prussia's acts of violence have plunged Europe into misery," she wrote reproachfully to her daughter, " but we, who are exposed to his wilfulness more than any other country in Europe, are deserted. . . ."

The Empress knew, furthermore, that Russia's alliance with Prussia was strengthened by Catherine's intense dislike of herself. Catherine contemptuously called her a " canting old hypocrite, who suffered from a desire for power and possessions " (" sie leidet an Habs- und Herschsucht ").

It was fortunate for Maria Theresa, as it must be for all Kings, never to know exactly what their enemies are saying about them, for she might have been crushed completely had she heard Catherine's honest verdict written to Grimm in Paris :

" Her moaning proves her lust for power," Catherine wrote to Grimm ; " but as she forgets that sincere repentance would be displayed were she to discontinue her efforts for conquest, she must obviously persist in her evil ways."—" At first," Catherine writes in another letter, " Mamma did not want to swallow her son's suggestions ; master Joseph alone showed such a large appetite [for new territory], but as the conjurer's [Francis I.'s] four sons need enough to live on, their dear mamma was prompted to commit this passive crime. Now, however, she spends hours doing penance,

and unless her noble instincts are again perverted, mamma thinks she can easily atone for her sins and mend her ways."

Catherine's letter reflected the judgment passed on Maria Theresa by her contemporaries, who had always been made to feel uncomfortable by her high moral tone, which they condemned as priggishness. They were now relishing her defeat in this open struggle with her son. The fact that he had won became obvious to every one early in April when he joined his armies in Moravia, where his troops had been assembled to prepare for a possible attack by Frederick of Prussia.

Both Maria Theresa and Joseph were profoundly disturbed when he left Vienna to join his troops. Though their recent quarrel had made them almost hate each other, they never overcame the peculiar attachment that bound them to each other against their will. Wraxall, who was then in Vienna, describes their parting:

"The Emperor went yesterday to join the army," Wraxall writes. "He and his brother Maximilian rose at four o'clock in the morning; and as soon as it was light they walked for some time on the ramparts, waiting for the Empress Queen, in order to take leave of her. When she was ready, they repaired to her apartment, and proceeded together to the chapel in the palace. There, on their knees, they passed above an hour in prayer, invoking the Divine assistance on the Austrian arms. Maria Theresa was extremely agitated during the whole service; but when, at the conclusion, she prepared to bid her sons adieu, her grief became too strong for her frame. She held the Emperor long in her arms, sobbed, and, at separating from him, nearly fainted. Joseph tore himself from his mother's embraces, carrying with him her parting benediction."

As this passage implies, Joseph's victory over his mother was not quite as complete as outsiders such as Catherine of Russia liked to think. Now that he was virtually pledged to carry on this war of his own choosing, her disapproval had made a belated appeal to him. He wrote to Frederick of Prussia in the hope that the war might still be averted, and that the Bavarian question might be settled by peaceful negotiations.

Frederick, who always enjoyed a polemic, welcomed this opportunity of pointing out to his younger adversary that perhaps the time had passed when the Holy Roman Emperor had the right to "dispose of imperial fiefs as he saw fit." This phrase alone should have made Joseph realise that for Frederick this war of the Bavarian Succession was merely a phase in his efforts to become more powerful than the Holy Roman Emperor, who was officially his master. During this crisis, furthermore, when Joseph needed all the self-assurance he could muster, he repressed his suspicions of Frederick; the Emperor would not admit to himself that perhaps the Prussian was encouraging their correspondence because it was giving him more time to prepare for the war.

On July 5, Frederick's armies invaded Austrian territory near Nachod, and the war had begun. All of Maria Theresa's clear-sighted predictions came true, and Joseph was in despair. "Our enemy is stronger than we are," he wrote miserably to his mother, as though she had not been repeating this fact to him for months; "they are prepared for anything, and the King of Prussia is a great warrior. We are alone, we are entirely without allies. There is not a moment to be lost. . . ."

A curious change came over Maria Theresa when she received this outcry from Joseph, when he called on her to help him. As soon as she felt that he needed her—

after all, he was only a mistaken young creature who could not manage without her assistance—her power to act revived forcibly. She was determined to " try the impossible," to " find a way of ending this war at once."

To Joseph she wrote: " I feel new strength, and I shall do everything in my power to save the wreckage of your inheritance. If you can conclude the peace on the battlefield, do so; you can put the blame for everything on my grey head, which is no longer good for anything else."

She was so carried away by the temporary revival of her old vitality that she committed a most unconsidered act, an act of which she would have been utterly incapable when she was younger. Without informing Joseph, who was after all officially her co-Regent and the commander-in-chief of her armies, she wrote to Frederick of Prussia. In this letter, which was secretly delivered to Frederick by Baron von Thugut, the Empress made the King of Prussia offers of peace. She assured her old enemy that if he would end the war Austria would demand only a small section of Bavaria.

Thugut left Vienna on July 13 for Frederick's army headquarters. At the same time the Empress sent a special messenger to Joseph, so that when he heard what she had done, Frederick had already been informed. Frederick was amused at the way in which Maria Theresa had once more taken affairs into her own hands. Joseph had been humiliated almost beyond endurance. " What can I do," he wrote reproachfully to his mother, " but to leave everything and run away, perhaps to Italy. You have crushed me utterly. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to learn that the answer you receive from the King of Prussia has frustrated your efforts."

Joseph was to have this bitter satisfaction, for Frederick did not accept the Empress's terms at once, and the war, which in the end was a victory for Prussia, dragged on without decisive battles. This War of the Bavarian Succession is rightly called a "Potato war" by some German historians, for to get enough to eat, the soldiers on both sides had to spend much of their time digging potatoes in the fields.

The Peace was finally concluded at Teschen on May 13, 1779, Maria Theresa's sixty-first birthday. Catherine of Russia acted as the guarantor of this peace. Austria renounced all her claims to the Bavarian succession for all time, but was given the small Inn district between the Tirol and Austria itself. Obviously Frederick had dictated the terms of peace. As a rule Joseph disliked titles and honours, but when he signed this Peace Treaty as the co-Regent, he ironically added all of his many titles to his signature. The breach between him and his mother had become insurmountable.

He was suffering so intensely from his personal humiliation that he did not clearly grasp the political significance of this Treaty. Maria Theresa, however, had no illusions. When the Peace was celebrated in St. Stephen's Church in Vienna, she wrote to Kaunitz after the service: "To-day I have ended my career. Whatever else I may do in my life will not be particularly important."

She knew that the Peace of Teschen ended her lifelong struggle with Frederick of Prussia, and that she had lost. By this Peace, Prussia, the most powerful state in north Germany, had for the first time risen to defend the rights of another Electorate State against the Holy Roman Empire. The other German States began to look up to Prussia as their leader. This Peace of

Teschen was the first step towards that second German Empire which had its beginnings in the "Deutscher Fürstenbund," the union of North German States established by Frederick the Great in 1785, and which culminated in the foundation of the Second German Empire, the "Second Realm," in Versailles in 1871.

Now, towards the end of her life, Maria Theresa realised that the Habsburg dynasty, for which she had given her life, would not last for ever. She had sacrificed herself and her family for an illusion. She knew intuitively that Prussia's ascendancy was more than a passing victory won by Frederick, whom the world now called the Great. During her reign she had struggled to defend her Empire against the rising tide of Prussia's influence in Europe, and for her the Peace of Teschen meant ultimate defeat. "I will admit to you," she wrote to her son Ferdinand, "that I am desperate. I tremble whenever a door slams, when my carriage drives too quickly, when my ladies-in-waiting walk more quickly than usual. I lecture myself, trying to recall how I felt when I was thirty-six years old; but I was young then, and I had a husband who meant everything to me. I am now weakened by my age and by my appalling destiny, and my body has no resistance left. I can master my soul with the help of my Faith, but my power to act has passed completely."

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

MARIA THERESA'S understanding of her country's position during the War of the Bavarian Succession had surprised some of the men at her Court. It had been generally believed that her judgment of affairs had been impaired by her disconsolate frame of mind and her declining health, but her astuteness during this war convinced them that they had been mistaken. She was no longer always able to act wisely and with the necessary determination, but her theoretical grasp of the political problems affecting Austria was sure to the end.

Increasingly, however, her every thought was centred on Austria alone, on the past and future of her Family. Now that she was no longer convinced that this dynasty was eternal, her passion for Austria became fierce and narrow. Other countries interested her only as they concerned Austria, and even before the depression which overcame her after the Bavarian War she was curiously unaware of the tremendous changes that were occurring in the outside world. She was entirely a product of the old order; she never saw beyond the traditional conceptions taught her by her father.

She did not have the slightest understanding of the challenge to the old order expressed, for instance, in the Americans' Declaration of Independence. She was not in the least curious to know more about these "rebels." To her rebellion meant the revolt of a group of men against one King in favour of another ruler. It would never have dawned upon her that men could revolt

against the established order of society. Probably she had never read the Declaration of Independence. She still confined her reading to books recommended by the Church, and when Voltaire died during the Bavarian War she must have been relieved to know that this dangerous man was out of the way. She did not even guess that he and his ideas would have a lasting influence. She did not see that the grumbling elements in France might be the forerunners of a movement which would gather sufficient force to bring her own daughter to the guillotine.

Maria Theresa had never met her friends or enemies on the thrones of Europe, and she could not understand why Joseph wanted to meet them. She was annoyed with him when he insisted on going to western Russia early in 1780 to meet Catherine the Great. Maria Theresa admitted that it was imperative to conciliate this woman, but she was brought up to believe that ministers were appointed for the purpose of approaching foreign monarchs. And as no war now forced her to be polite to Catherine, this woman filled her with more "horror" and "repulsion" than ever. Joseph went despite his mother's protests, but she suffered at the thought that her child should be contaminated by even a fleeting meeting with this immoral creature.

When he returned, he found Maria Theresa in very poor health. Her asthma had grown worse, and her heart was so weak that she was breathless after walking a short distance. She was now so stout from dropsy, her hands were so swollen that it was painful for her to hold a pen. Stairs were impossible for her. When, on her regular visits to Francis's tomb, she descended the vault in the Capuchin Church, she had to be let down in a chair held by strong ropes. She continued to attend to affairs of State; she received her ministers. No State

document was valid without her personal signature. She usually carried with her a box containing State papers, which was attached to her waist by a belt, but she was so pathetically large that it was difficult for her to get at these documents.

On October 20, 1780, she celebrated the fortieth anniversary of her reign, but this was not a joyful occasion. She was haunted by the sense of failure which never left her after the Bavarian War, and she was very lonely. Most of her old friends, such as Tarouca, had died, and she had not made new friends among the younger generation any more than she had accepted new ideas. Her children were afraid of her and hated each other, and the common people were seething with resentment towards her because she had recently introduced a high tax on intoxicating drinks.

On November 18, Maria Theresa mentioned in a letter to Marie Christine that she had a slight cold, but that " as she had no fever, it could be nothing of consequence." In another letter, written on the twentieth, she assured her daughter that she was only slightly indisposed, and that she had attended to affairs of State as usual. Marie Christine, however, the only one of Maria Theresa's children who had a natural warm affection for her, was anxious, and she and her husband came to Vienna.

When the Empress's physicians had found that her lungs were congested, Joseph also sent for Leopold, who after his mother's death would be the heir-presumptive. Maximilian happened to be at home. Gloomy Marianne and Elisabeth, who had been in attendance on their mother, were with her as well.

By the twenty-sixth, Maria Theresa knew that she was dying. She accepted this fact quietly. She had

felt for a long time " that there is nothing to be gained by growing old." She was determined to die simply. She attended to her routine business to the end, signing papers and letters and acting as though these last days of her life were ordinary days like any others. Not for an instant did she dramatise herself.

Joseph, who did not leave her during the last forty-eight hours, tried at first to make her think her condition less serious than it was. Glancing out of the window, he remarked that it was raining. " Yes," his mother said casually, " it is indeed frightful weather for a journey as long as the one before me."

Subconsciously, to the end she resented Joseph's efforts to free himself from her. She had always spoken to him in German, and she spoke German to her daughters until she died, but now, when consciousness was fading away, she addressed him consistently in French, the language she used when dealing with ambassadors and strangers.

On November 29, when she was obviously sinking, her children urged her to lie down and rest. She refused and remained in her arm-chair, telling them that she did not wish death to come to her unawares, in sleep.

Towards the end, she was not troubled by political anxieties, by thoughts of Frederick the Great and the future of her dynasty. Instead, she was tormented by an intense realisation of the sad destinies she had forced upon her children. When she could hardly speak, she asked Marie Christine to assure her once more that she, at least, was happy in her marriage. Perhaps she wanted to explain to those of her sons and daughters who were with her, that her greatest duty had been the fulfilment of her earthly mission for the Family, the Habsburgs, the Dynasty. As her mind grew less clear, she must have confused this mission with her love of

God, for she said to her children: "I have sacrificed you all to God."

She died on November 29, 1780, at about nine o'clock in the evening.

A messenger went at once to inform Kaunitz that the Empress had died. He was dining when his servant admitted this messenger. The Chancellor still forbade any one to mention death in his presence. He looked up questioningly as the messenger from the *Hofburg* entered. The man bowed his head and did not speak. Two tears rolled slowly down the old Chancellor's cheeks. His servant had never before seen him display any emotion.

After Maria Theresa's death, the Church did not repay her for her narrow-minded loyalty to her God. Pope Pius VI. would not allow her to be buried by his legate in Vienna with the pomp usually shown a deceased Catholic monarch. Pius declared that such honours could not be given a woman, even though she had been the ruler of a great Catholic country. And the Austrian people, to whom throughout her life she had wanted to be a good mother, now made it clear that they resented her harsh type of motherhood as deeply as her own children resented it. It is recorded that disrespectful remarks rose from the crowd as the funeral cortège moved slowly through the streets of Vienna. Her people felt little grief at her passing. They already knew that Joseph, who the next year proclaimed religious freedom in Austria, would be a more humane ruler than his mother had been. Ironically enough, Frederick, her bitterest enemy, was one of the few human beings who appreciated what she had done for her country. "After the death of Charles VI.," he wrote, "Europe thought that Austria was lost. A woman, however, raised this country again, and maintained its position with firmness."

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